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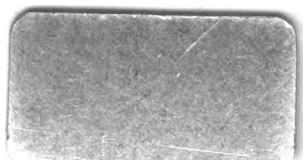
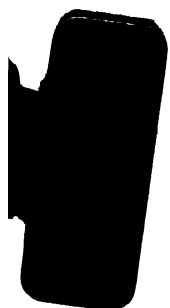


BEHIND THE  
CURTAIN:

by

L'abbé de LACROIX





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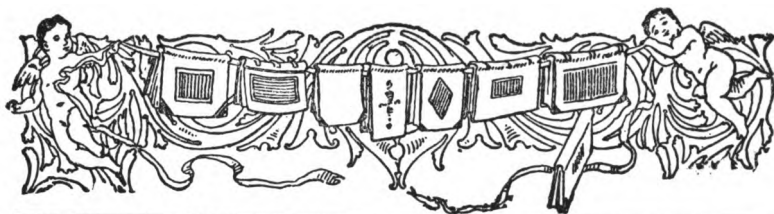






# **Behind the Curtain**



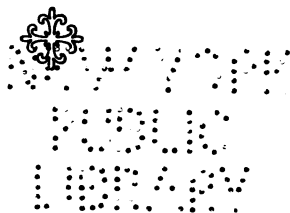


# Behind the Curtain

BY

L'Abbé de LACROIX, pseud.

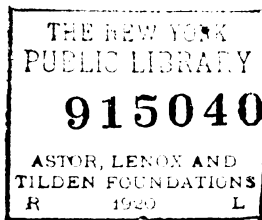
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**To live is to think and act, and  
to think and act is to change.**

*—James Allen.*



## Foreword

**T**HIS book is not for mummies. Neither is it for scandal-seeking fools. It is meant for people able to go by their own judgment and for those willing to acquire this most important habit.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN is going to give you an inside view of **religion**; how it is being handled. And in the mean time I shall endeavor to set forth, how it ought to be handled.

Those keeping their eyes open wide will readily admit that there is something wrong. Altogether wrong, at that. Those slumbering might awake, so I fear, a little too late. Since the large majority of us are not only slumbering but indulging, mentally speaking, in a rather sound sleep I would like to stir them up—at the eleventh hour.

The recent events in France, Portugal and Spain, and still more so the Home

Rule of Ireland being pushed into the foreground, do not only give striking evidence of general dissatisfaction but might as well be taken as warnings as how to prevent that tremendous restlessness of our day, prevailing all over the world.

Religion has always been and will always be the most important factor in Public Welfare. People do not only need religion; they want it, too. The more humanity will advance in sciences, the higher the standard of average education is being raised; while on the other hand the more we are getting inclined to think, or at least to make ourselves believe we know everything or at least a whole lot, the farther we will be pushed from what can be termed **mental equilibrium**. This mental equilibrium is what we need above all; hence, we are bound to be looking for practical means to establish and keep up the same.

Man, as one would hardly need to have this explained, consists of body and soul. In order as not to make

creation of man a farce, soul and body must need work in harmony. This harmony, however, must not be an imaginary one but must be based upon a practical and strong foundation: a good education, by which one must not think of stuffing the pupils' minds with things beautiful to listen to or look at which, in the end, will turn out to be of very little, if any, practical avail. A good education is the habit of doing the right thing and avoiding all that is wrong and doing so not by mere intuition but by deliberate discrimination.

Religion, then, most naturally will appeal to every one as the basis of education for, as a matter of course, it is hard to imagine that children brought up without religious education will ever turn out to be useful to Humanity and themselves as well. **People want religion to lift them up mentally and morally; but they want a religion they can grasp and such a religion is what they need.**

It is all very nice and well to witness flamboyant ceremonials with gorgeous

displays pleasing your eye; but tell me, what does it amount to if you have witnessed such church services without knowing what they meant or what they are being held for?

Verily, a plain, sincere and **true** heart-to-heart talk of any minister of the gospel, giving his flock practical advice as to how to avoid evil, amounts to by far more than all the gorgeous services of the past ten centuries.

I should be not a bit surprised by being accused of harshness. But if you have once overcome the impression of uneasiness as might be caused by this foreword, you will find out mighty quick that all I want is Truth.

There is nothing terrifying in Truth to those who are sincere; while it is simply dreadful to look on as how people are being crowded down under the pretext of sincerity, the latter being hypocritically covered with the mantle of Truth.

I am going to lift the curtain, so as to give you a glimpse at what is going on behind it. And I am fully aware of my

task being a rather difficult and very delicate one. I would like to see the Principles of Life of general—and I might as well say—of eternal value—unshattered. Therefore, should the following chapters happen to mislead the kind reader to the opinion as if I were led by animosity, please, bear in mind those Principles to be standing high above institutions and individuals.

It often happens that if you want to preserve Principles you will have to hurt those underneath same.

Take, for instance, an oak, which for generations has been the ornament of a certain landscape; as soon as you will notice that there is something wrong with the great big oak, providing you want to save it so as to preserve the beauty of the view, you will investigate where the trouble comes from and, if needs be, you will take a hatchet and chop down all the drawbacks mercilessly. This might not please those looking on; it might hurt yourself even, especially so if you are inclined to admit that trees do also belong to the class of liv-

ing beings; but you will simply have to do it lest you will lose the oak. So, in order to save the whole we very often have to do away with parts of it.

In the period of aeroplanes there can hardly anything make people sit up. And still, it is remarkably astonishing, how anxiously we are keeping away from real light, which is nothing else than seeing things as they really are in order to find out how they ought to be.

For as soon as we are familiar with the idea of how things ought to be, we will have at hand means to manage life in that direction. And how easy this would become if every one of us could get up as high as to mind his or her own business.

This book of mine—although this might sound assuming—has got serious claims upon public interest. Should you happen to doubt this, convince yourself by reading same. Read it over carefully, however, and I am satisfied, it will do you no harm, at the worst.

I am fully prepared to being attacked and vilely slandered because of this pub-

lication. Go ahead, everybody! You know, an opinion which excites no opposition at all is not worth having. And you also might know, as Marie Corelly says: "Nearly every one runs away from a declared truth, or if they stop at all it is only to spit upon it and call it a lie."

Well, you cannot help such things.

But I know one thing, which is that every human being has an equal right to an opinion of his very own: consequently every individual must be granted the privilege of expressing his opinion. Providing, therefore, such an expression is forthcoming without meaning harm, it is justified.

Whether or not this publication of mine will be considered an important one is to be decided upon by those who will read it. As far as I am concerned I am perfectly satisfied in assuring the kind reader that all I have said and all I am going to tell you in the following chapters is being told in good conscience, and the only reward I am looking for

is that it might add just a bit toward  
furthering the welfare of Human Soci-  
ety.—

**L'Abbé de Lacroix.**



## Behind the Curtain

### The Garden of Allah

**A** YOUNG man destined to the priesthood either by his own choice, or by 'appointment', or—once in a while—by real vocation, when entering seminary feels like a child would when admitted into the Wonderland of Allah: everything will look beautiful, everybody will appeal to him as grand. He will feel as if lifted up into the realms of the Great Unknown.

Of course, like the child, so the young seminarian will be looking forward to anything but disappointments. As a matter of fact, however, in great many cases he will come to find nothing but a long and rather irksome chain of disappointments.

Let us go back to the young seminarian.

His education before entering seminary—as a rule—is more or less beneath

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the average. If his parents thought, or he himself was fortunate enough to imagine he had what we call **vocation**, they both are inclined to overlook and to neglect some or all of those points which—for the sake of a good and promising start—ought to be cultivated most. They will think it is enough for the candidate to be a decent chap; vocation, so they imagine, will do the rest. And this is where the disappointments are bound to come in.

What is, or what would you term **vocation** to the priesthood?

The priesthood being a continuous service of God, those claiming to have a vocation must be called by God. This calling, then, will signify itself by an unbounded desire to sacrifice one's self for the cause of God.

It would be extremely interesting to know, how many of our priests entered seminary led by nothing less and induced by no other regards than their vocation? But, I think, here we ought

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not to go into details, this being so very delicate a point.

Now then, granted that the majority of the candidates are equipped with vocation, let us follow them inside the seminary.

From the very moment of his enrollment the young cleric, somehow or other, begins thinking of his importance. If he happens to be a lad of modest and humble disposition, there will be others on hand ready and only too willing to stuff his mind and his throbbing young heart with those dangerous ideas of self-importance.

The mysticism surrounding him in his new home wherever he might turn; the seclusion of life he is bound to live whether it so pleases him or not; the services, the meaning of which he is perfectly at a loss to grasp will make him plunge into a state of uncertainty. And if he is not strong enough so as to overcome this very critical stage of life, he is running the risk—so close at hand—

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of either turning a hypocrite, or a criminal.

Now, please, do not get shocked.

A hypocrite is a one doing things against his conviction and conscience because lacking the strength, courage or nerve—whichever might be parallel to his mental disposition—to step out, to admit his mistake and to look around for something else more fitting his disposition. A criminal in this case is such a one, who knowingly and purposely will use himself as a 'tool of salvation' whereas he might have become so much perplexed as not to believe in God's existence even.

The majority of the clergy is being recruited from out of the middle-class, and below. In fact, most of them are sons of wage-earners. Consequently their education is rather lacking, or if fairly good, has not got much of a system in it. Whether he has vocation when entering seminary or not, in fifty cases out of a hundred, so we should imagine,

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the young clerics could easily turn out sincere, useful priests would there be imparted to them a practical education.

It ought to be made clear to them that they are not to become superior beings and that they will remain poor, frail human creatures should they in the course of their career reach as high as the See of St. Peter's even. Their teachers, superiors, spiritual directors, prefects, or whatever you might call those venerable gentlemen in charge of the young clerics, ought to bear in mind—and very anxiously, too—that what was tolerated, taken for good and believed in, say, only fifty years ago, would not work to-day.

Granted that Jesus Christ in person was the founder of the Church of Rome, what was his aim? What was the rock, called Peter, upon which he built his Church?

Was it the Ten Commandments?

No.

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Was it the Five Commandments of the Church?

No.

Was it the splendor of services?

No.

Well, what was it then?

Nothing but **plain, humane sincerity** and the honest desire to **help his fellow-men**. Yes, indeed, this is what it was.

The supreme law of Christendom is our Lord's advice of everlasting avail and importance: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." So then, the young cleric ought to be taught first of all sincere love to his neighbor and this above all, and free from all pretense and far from all hypocrisy. Humility will follow as a most natural consequence of such sincere disposition.

I happened to witness an enrolment of candidates to the priesthood which I would have taken for the ouverture to a rather comical entertainment had I myself not been too seriously concerned. The youngsters were lined up in

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front of a long table where there were seated several high church dignitaries, asking questions altogether out of keeping with the time, the place and the boys. Can you blame them for getting a wrong start when initiated with an air of make-believe?—

Christ established his Church to help those who **wanted** to be helped by him. God condemns nothing, for in everything there is a portion of himself; consequently, those not following the teachings of Christ cannot be condemned. Christ himself said: "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world." Those, however, expecting to become ministers of the gospel of Christ, must, above all, get the right start. And there is but one right start to the priesthood: the spirit of sincerity must be prevailing in the seminaries, althrough.

I need not give you notice, and I surmise, most of you will feel rather easy

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because of my not giving you one mild shock or two. But in the mean time, you better get ready for little shocks, for I intend telling you the plain truth, in order to show where all the trouble comes in, what extremely dangerous measures it has already taken, and how it could and **should** be done with.

The education as seen in Catholic seminaries—in most cases—is not only one-sided but also leading into a stage of permanent perplexity. And it is not so difficult to find out where this comes in. The young men to be educated to the priesthood hear by far too much of the importance they are to gain as soon as admitted to the ministry. It is, undoubtedly, of utmost importance to become the teacher, leader and tutor of one's fellow-men; so the task of a priest, just like that of any minister of the gospel is a very important one. But this does not indicate in the least the importance of the individual, unless one has the ability of making himself a **useful** teacher and guide for others.

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Two points of utmost importance in the education of the young clergy to-day seem to receive too little attention, if any at all. One is, that the very atmosphere of Catholic seminaries is breeding a rather strong leaning toward hypocrisy. The other point, at least as much important, is the utter lack of what one might term social education in the seminaries.

As to hypocrisy, the young clerics ought to be taught from the very beginning of their ecclesiastical career, to show themselves **just as they are**. As a matter of fact, however, they hear too much of 'keeping up appearances.' So much so, that later on, when entering practical life they cannot help continuing this very dangerous attitude and, small wonder, a large—altogether too large—portion of them will turn out as supposed to be leaders of their respective flocks doing practically nothing but keeping up appearances.

Those who ever had a chance to get

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an inside view of the education of the young clergy, to their utter dismay, will readily admit them to be crowded down instead of being lifted up. And so in the most cases they can hardly be blamed for turning out failures both, from an ecclesiastical and social point of view.

The young clerics ought to be taught self-reliance and a broad-minded education imparted to them. Quite some more of what is needed in practical life, and much less of what belongs to centuries long gone by would make them acknowledge, how well they must be posted if they want to live up to their task at least half way decently. There is altogether too much, by far too much of the red-tape spirit being stuffed into the heads of the seminarians; and there you will find one tendency still more dangerous, which is the narrow-mindedness surrounding the future priest, going to such an extent, that even before actually entering the ministry they will be open-

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ly advocating an opinion—which they honestly never can admit—and which is that only those who belong to the Roman Church may expect being admitted into heaven. Why, this is an utter nonsense and in its consequences upon Human Society quite dangerous, too.

So then, if those in charge of the seminaries want to give the public at large useful teachers, priests, who could stand not only among priests but among men as well—and that is what they are here for—they ought to concentrate all of their ambition toward an absolutely plain education; such a one, that the young cleric, already before being admitted to the ministry—should be resolved to show himself as he is, and to acquire such conduct, morals and knowledge as might induce people to take after him.

When entering ministry, the cleric should know that unless he will be able to influence his flock by his whole carriage, his career will be nothing but a con-

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tinuous deception. And a deception of the worst kind, too. For no priest can righteously call himself a christian, much less a good priest unless his life is in keeping with what he teaches.

The young seminarians are given too little of recreation and of mental relaxation. The result of this is that as soon as entering ministry they are only too anxious to make good for all pleasures and amusements which they were denied during the years of study.

Let them know and tell them openly—and there is no harm done in this—after the day's work, or whenever it might seem fit and proper, to amuse themselves as decent Christians would. Make them read good periodicals, so that they may get an idea of what is going on outside the walls of the seminary; let them take in once in a while lectures, concerts or good shows. (There are plenty of them). On the other hand educate them with such a tendency that they may know and feel amusements

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and distractions to be only means to make them enjoy the more the strenuous work waiting for them in the ministry.

Give them a special course in good manners. **Table manners too.**

I knew an elderly gentleman. He was a good priest, well liked by his flock. He was a great scholar and could have accomplished by far more, had he had better manners. Still in the prime of his life, he reached the pinnacle of his career in a small country parish because of lack of good manners, which, as you might wonder, is not at all a strange occurrence. One day he had company. His guest, a very refined gentleman, was just delighted by the conversation into which he was led by the host; but when dinner-time came, all his rather exalted opinion came to naught. At the dining table they were seated opposite. As soon as soup was served the host handed his napkin to his amazed guest. It was of no avail telling his host he had already

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a napkin using it in the way customary with educated people. "Never mind," said the priest. "You just take this and better put it in your collar the old-fashioned way, for when I am eating it is you who needs the napkin."

Let the young clerics get the habit of neat appearance. It is a pity that this needs special mention, but it **does**, very much so. For how on earth can you expect, at least in the twentieth century, a priest of slouchy appearance to have good influence with his flock?

The seminarian while dwelling in the so called 'Garden of Allah', must know that soon he is to enter the rather dusty road of Life. There will be plenty of dust and mud being thrown upon him: deservedly or not, does not matter in the least. Do educate him, therefore, in a high-spirited manner. Give him **illusions**, but be careful so these may not turn out to be **delusions**, for then there will be very little left of the exalting poetical atmosphere of what he thought

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was the 'Garden of Allah' and what he later on will be rather inclined to take for a place way down below, starting with an "H."

## **The White Sister**

**I**F our young girls are taken care of properly then the country itself is taken care of for then we have secured good mothers for the generation to come. And this is what we need above all.

In order as to come right to the point, our Catholic convents, that is to say schools of various grades as being run by Sisters, are supposed to have intrusted to them the most important part in building up the country, having charge of the education of the mothers of the next generation.

Our American girls are of a really sweet disposition, altogether different from that of their European sisters. This favorable difference might be partly attributed to the climate but also to the stage of development of this country, showing itself in more than one direction, the real American spirit seem-

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ing like Springtime in the seasons of ages.

The main task in educating Uncle Sam's daughters ought to be to preserve their lovable disposition in order to enable them to make the best of it in the course of their lives.

Are our girls really taken care of?

Not much.

If not, can you blame them?

No.

Who then is to be blamed?

The parents and convents.

Many parents would send their daughters to convents merely because they think this to be 'stylish.'

Although it is a pity to admit it, the education as performed in our convents is rather lacking practical usefulness.

Some of the Sisters are so young as hardly able to take care of themselves when given charge of the education of others almost their age; others again are already too old to accomplish anything but routine work. Education, however,

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as you will know and admit should be anything but routine work. The Sisters themselves should be given a more practical education. It is not the strict and stiff keeping up of worn-out traditions that our girls need. If you want to see them well educated they must be given a good and practical preparation for their daily walk to come.

Religious exercises as you will see them in convents are intended for making the girls sincere, good, christian women. Stuffing religion down into their throat is not the way to accomplish that end.

Our Catholic girls mostly are being educated as if they were to enter heaven as soon as they have left the convent. Educate them so as to equip them to enter practical life. They must know that they are to become patriotic daughters of their country, faithful wives and tender loving mothers before they will ever get a chance of being admitted into heaven.

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Religion, of course, naturally goes with a good education for it is its foundation. But religion alone will not make a girl anything worth while. Practical courses in house-keeping are rather missing. Sewing, cooking and the like are what they need by far more than fancy embroidery or burnt wood work.

If one has to do a great deal of walking, you certainly would not give her lessons in singing, but you would show her how to use her limbs wisely. Would you not? Well then — — —

One cannot help noticing a very disagreeable feature with the cloister education of our girls. As a rule almost every Catholic parish has a convent of Sisters. There is a parish-school besides which the Sisters usually are running a boarding school called 'Academy.' In the latter our young girls willy-nilly acquire the very detrimental and foolish caste-spirit. The boarders of those academies often seem rather pleased at the

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thought of being superior to those attending 'but' the parish-school.

I often wonder why the Catholic Church would not take up the practical education of girls like the Young Women's Christian Association is doing? I have repeatedly attended meetings of the Y. W. C. A. of one of the eastern cities with a great deal of edification and I think those institutions are accomplishing at least as much as a few churches together would, if not more. You would not think it to be possible that the Y. W. C. A. would be discouraged by prominent Catholics, both priests and laymen, who are standing quite high in the esteem of public opinion of their kind, the only reason for such forbearance being the stereotypic 'belief' that the Y. W. C. A. is proselyting and narrow-minded. If they are proselyting, the other party is doing the same; and if they are narrow-minded, they had to learn this from somebody before them.

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**And whom do you think they could have learned it from?**

**There is another feature with the convents which you cannot help noticing to disadvantage and this is that the Sisters are educating their pupils as if there was no opposite sex. Such an education might go with living angels, if there were such, but it will never work with our girls of the twentieth century. And one could not deny without making himself guilty of hypocrisy the one-sided cloister education to be blamed for the ruin of many a good girl. The Sisters, of course, mean best, but this alone will never do. Something must be done in order to secure not only the admission of, but also a hearty welcome to the spirit of practical life into our convents. This is the only way to enable the girls to be standing on their own feet when leaving convent, in most cases in order to enter life at once.**

**In education mind and heart are the two main considerations. A thoroughly**

## Behind the Curtain

practical training of the heart and a sound development of the mind and its faculties is what our girls need most. As to mind, they are being taught many things they will never be able to utilize, much of the valuable time being taken up with things of no practical avail whatever. High mathematics, metaphysics even, and heaven knows what else of that sort is being stuffed into the heads of those supposed to become good housewives and mothers. It is said those things are just as necessary to the brain as gymnastics to the body. But if you do too much of gymnastics and sprain your ankle, then you will not be able to walk. A thorough reconstruction of the school-plans would be a great thing, and it is much needed, too.

As to the education of the heart this is not so easily done for woman's heart is a queer little thing, after all. Our girls are soon to become women, so what they need most is to help them acquire good judgment and to convince them that the

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determination to have their own way, so much characteristic of our day, is not only unbecoming a really good girl but it might, if let go on, spoil the rest of her life.

The greatest school is the world and the wisest teacher is life, and the greatest men and women the world has ever known have received their education in it and have graduated under the practical direction of its teacher. The great difficulty in giving our girls a good education is that there is no law of the house and no law of the land that can be invoked to save those who go astray in so large a number. The time is coming, when there will be a law to protect girls in spite of themselves. But there is none now. Time and circumstances, no doubt, will add a great deal towards improving conditions but we should not keep on waiting for that *deus ex machina*. We simply cannot afford it.

The one thing in the world that should be lasting is love. Where there is real

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love there is no affected frivolity, nor suggestive flirtations. Modesty is a true sister of love. Chatter, and garrulousness, although often seeming harmless, and natural to youth are dangerous, because they will show themselves in excess of spirit.

Teaching the girls to be their own sweet modest and quiet selves is the acme of a good education. The best people, the most gifted, the most useful and the most worthy have never been the drumbeaters of life.

It seems as if the Church to-day were in a wrong attitude as regards amusements; she seems to be laboring with the tendency of the old Puritans which taught the complete repression of emotions. If people are going to be saved from sin it is not by merely hearing certain sermons, nor is it by mere intellectual exercises which are so stagnating that they can cut out of your life all interest in that particular field of activity, but rather by training the emotional na-

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ture until the very idea of sin will be revolting to the mind.

Our girls as educated in convents are kept under the impression that going to theatre is a crime, or at least a sin, whereas good theatres are at least as effective as unpractical sermons, and less perplexing.

“And so, since these will not avail  
In life’s uncertain war  
I wish you ever more, my dear,  
To be just what you are.”

## **The Deep Purple**

**N**O one will deny the Church of Rome to be a wonderfully great institution. The fact alone that she is living now in her twentieth century is more to her credit than anything else. Still, no matter how great and wonderful an institution be, time will leave its undeniable traces upon it. The Catholic Church, it is said, was founded by Christ in person; the Ten Commandments, constituting her fundamental laws, so the Scriptures hold, were given to Moses on the Mount of Sinai from God himself and—to keep pace with the Scriptures—were confirmed by Christ. So, then, the Catholic Church can be rightly called a divine institution as far as her origin is concerned. But this church is being run by frail, human beings now for nineteen-hundred and twelve years, hence, although some might not like to admit this, she was, is and always will

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be subject to the influences of time, man and places.

It would, therefore, sound utterly childish to assert that the Roman Church is free and exempt from, and standing above all and any influences and changes and one is tempted to add that in all likelihood she would be far better off had she in the course of epochs given more heed to those influences.

The period of the *Non Possumus*, fortunately, belongs to History as I shall try to show in one of the following chapters. The Catholic Church was founded for the welfare, that is to say for the uplift of humanity. So then, taking into consideration that Christ in his unlimited love to Man, which not only stands way above all and any conception of love but also way beyond human comprehension, died for the salvation of Man, there should nothing seem impossible for love's sake which ever since Christ's death spells sacrifice, the

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Church being supposed to further that very spirit of Christ.

One of the most striking and one might say also of the most important features with the Catholic Church is Confession.

Confession is not only one of the seven sacraments, but I dare say it is also the chief one not among the sacraments only, but among all regulations and usages of the Church, for it intends betterment of Man.

Confession, according to the catechism of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, is a sacrament in which the sins committed after baptism are forgiven.

The more important a certain regulation be, the more carefully we must go about applying same in practical life. If we hold Penance to be a sacrament then we must admit it to be the most efficient means for betterment. The requirements to a good and worthy confession you can easily find in the catechism as

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aforesaid. The thing I want to say a few words about you will not find in the catechism, but you cannot help coming across the same at almost every instance.

The Catholic Church in her Five Commandments holds that all and every faithful of hers **must** go to confession at least once a year and receive Holy Eucharist during the Easter season. So if you are a Catholic you are strictly bound by law to comply with this commandment. Now, every law-making body or individual must not be satisfied with issuing laws but is also bound in conscience, and very strictly, too, to give the people at large all possible facilities to become law-abiding subjects or citizens. It seems very easy to pass and issue laws, but it often seems extremely hard, at times impossible even to see those laws carried out in practical life.

To begin with, since in Confession you are supposed to accuse yourself of your sins committed since your last

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confession or, in case of first-communicants, since you were baptised, the first and fundamental requirement to making a worthy confession must be the penitent's ability to reason.

One can hardly see how anybody not having reached as yet at least the first stage of mental maturity could accuse himself of having committed sins. If one did not get as far as to be able to discriminate good from evil, such a one cannot know whether he has accomplished good deeds or committed sins. As a consequence to this no child not having reached the age of discrimination should be admitted to Confession, lest it might be running the risk of making a confession which will not amount to anything, or which is worse still, it might incur the great danger of getting a premature conception of sin.

With great wonder you will see little tots, hardly able to give their names, lined up in front of the communion rail. And knowing that the Catholic

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Church does not admit to Holy Eucharist anyone without a previous confession, you will be rather puzzled as to how those tiny bits of humanity could have made their confession even had they to 'confess' anything at all.

As an every-day occurrence you will see pupils of convents, orphans asylums, seminaries and of all the other religious institutions going to Confession monthly, weekly and even more often than that. Do you not think it would take living angels to receive the sacrament of Penance so often without losing or at least seriously injuring the elevated spirit and pure disposition of heart and mind as required to worthily receiving same? Do you not think there lies imminent danger of 'getting used to it' by receiving it too often? Have you ever met young people after having once left those religious institutions neglecting not only going to confession, but their religious duties at large as well? And when asked for an explanation, they

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will calmly retort "Why, I have been kept going to confession so often that it should do for my grand-children even."

The sacrament of Penance, taken as such, is a great thing. Just think of a criminal by his own free will appearing before a court and accusing himself of a crime he feels guilty of. No matter how dreadful a crime he had committed, there still remains a ray of hope for betterment left with him and the most rigid judge could not help showing some leniency. Before God we all are criminals; more or less so, anyway. Our daily life is full of weaknesses, frailties, commissions and omissions, and it almost seems as if we intended rewarding God's unlimited love with unlimited carelessness or impudence even.

What a wonderfully great thing it is then, and how much it must please God to see his creatures repentant and trying to make good by facilitating their sentence. There could hardly anything be thought as so efficient a means for

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improvement, mental and moral uplift as the sacrament of Penance as held by the Roman Church. But, if we come to think that confessors and penitents as well are but frail human beings so much subject to outside influences and if we let History remind us of the unbelievable changes Man had to undergo during the past nineteen centuries, we cannot help realizing what an extremely great care is imperative if we do not want to see the most potent factor of betterment turn into a dangerous tool of decay.

Nobody, and especially no child should be **compelled** to go to confession. At times you **might** find some explanation for doing so but you certainly will **never** find a good or at least acceptable **excuse** for it. Educate the children in a sincere, broad-minded, really and truly Christian spirit which would make them feel happy over the least good deed and which would fill their little hearts with sorrow over the least trespass and you

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will never need to force, to compel, persuade or to ask even anyone to do what they are supposed to be doing but when induced by their conscience.

As to the grown-ups there is nothing more efficient in inducing them to avoid evil for the sake of their immortal soul than sincere advice and true brotherly love, such a love which will endeavor to eradicate evil without pulling out the roots of a good disposition.

Do you think Confession to-day has got much of attracting power with Catholics at large? You might retort it ought to have; but, please, bear in mind I was asking whether it **does** have? It should be the case, of course, and it would be not so very hard to restore the sacrament of Penance to the strength and power it was fitted out with when established.

As I said before, confessors and penitents are but frail, human beings. And in our day you cannot help noticing a rather strong leaning towards indiffer-

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ence in matters religious. People begin to be thinking for themselves and have for some decades past. And they ought not to be handicapped in their honest anxiety of acquiring the gift of thinking; on the contrary, they should be given all possible chance to think and to do it in the right way.

Did you ever hear of penitents having been driven away from the confessional—and this for good—because of altogether irrelevant questions asked by the confessor?

Something must be done if the sacrament of Penance is to remain what it was meant and intended for: a great power for improving human life. **MAKE IT OPTIONAL.** Tell the faithful it is better to make no confession at all than to make their 'easter duty' out of sheer humane respects thus practically ridiculing this sacred institution. For if Confession is to be kept up as strictly binding obligation with the faithful of the

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**Catholic Church, then first get confes-  
sors and penitents without exception  
born in the deep purple.**

## **The Bird of Paradise**

**C**ELIBACY as prevailing in the Roman Church is an utter absurdity. This is quite a jump from the above heading, so you might think, but it is true just the same.

Could anyone reasonably deny woman's prevalent influence with the Church?

No.

Does the Church not need the hearty co-operation of woman?

She most decidedly does.

You can argue over these two questions and their answers as much as you please. The more you will argue, however, the nearer you will get to their being true. And this you cannot help for it lies with human nature.

The first woman to have influence with the Roman Church, as you may well know, was none less a person than the Blessed Virgin, who, in my opinion,

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bore the highest dignity that can be bestowed upon a woman, that of **Christian Motherhood**.

Let us get rid of all and any hypocritical attitude and let us openly admit that woman's influence with the Church is not only a prevailing feature, but is also very much needed: hence, the making of this influence a legitimate one appears as the only sound solution of this so very important question.

There are a score of quotations from the Scriptures, which would come in very handy to argue with against celibacy. Instead, I prefer quoting from the book of life, for this seems more natural, is more appealing and easier to grasp.

Celibacy I again call an utter absurdity because it is contrary to human nature, against sound reason and is also a wrong to human society, for the latter being composed of frail beings it can be only **detrimental to good morals**.

There always were and always will be

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bachelors, but let them be such by their own choice. It is against the free will of a human being to force upon it a certain state of life. How on earth can you expect a young man destined for the priesthood to proffer a promise binding him for the rest of his life while scarcely knowing himself? How can you bring such a promise in harmony with divine justice, common-sense or decency? Or can you? Well, if you can, then you are to be envied.

What is the chief argument of the Roman Church for celibacy? It is said the secret of her power and strength lies with celibacy. It is being preached, made believe, and partly believed, too, the priests of the Roman Church would be grossly handicapped in offering their entire life for the service of God were they allowed to marry. Now, please, can you see the consequence necessarily emanating from such a statement?

Are the priests of the Greek Rite, the Episcopalians and the ministers of all

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the other Christian denominations less good because allowed to marry? That must be so if the above statement stands for good. But since they not only are as good as the Roman priests but—naturally—must be more efficient in their practical work, that allegation as maintained by the Church of Rome cannot hold out, consequently it ought to be done with.

Can you imagine a man of education, an individual supposed to be spending all his life with strenuous work for the sake of others to be a cheerful toiler, while knowing that the ministry, if taken rightly and if accomplished only half way properly is one of the hardest tasks a person can be put at? There are so very few joys granted the true minister of the Gospel; the encouragements and consolations as offering themselves to the minister of the twentieth century are so few and small, that it certainly would be no more than right to grant him the privilege of a home. Now, who

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can make a house home-like? Who can help the minister in his daily struggles with good advice? Who can cheer him up when things seem to go wrong? Can a housekeeper? Or can a 'niece' do it? As an exception she might, but as an extremely rare one. As a rule, she won't. And how many of the priests of to-day are able to accomplish their task fully, or at least rightly without looking for any humane consideration? But a very few chosen ones, with the accent on 'few.' What then will become of the majority or rather the bulk of our Roman priests?

How many priests of extraordinary abilities, destined to accomplish great and noble deeds are doomed to spend the rest of their lives in a desert, called 'country parish' because of being human! (Get it?) How many there are just vegetating because crowded down by their housekeepers! And how many of them become a helpless prey to dullness and despondency because of celib-

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acy? Now, put to each paragraph the figures of Roman priests you know of to fit the case and add them up. Then pause for just a second to find out if there are any priests supreme to human nature and above it. Then get the result of this very plain problem. So, there you are.

What prospects has a good priest after a lifetime's strenuous work? When growing old and helpless he will be surrounded by paid for servants, very often the worst kind of hirelings, having nobody to cheer him up on the eve of his departing for good. A priest who was trying to make the best of his life for the sake of his fellow-men must be a living saint to recognize divine love and mercy in such deplorable a situation.

It is very true, no true minister of the Gospel is supposed to be looking for material reward for his work; but it is also true, that ministers are just as human as any member of their respective flocks, therefore it is no more than fair

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to treat them human-like. It is a great thing to be a minister of the Gospel, and it is a wonderful gift if in fulfilling his sacred duties one is able to get along by relying upon himself and nobody else but himself. But then again it is a dreadful thing, a down-right cruelty, of which God, being all-justice, could never approve, to turn out a failure or a professional hypocrite just because one is not able to get along entirely by himself, and this in spite of good qualities and abilities of no little avail, which is often the case.

Let me give you but one instance.

I knew of a Roman priest, who, I believe, is still alive and who after having spent thirty-five years in charge of a parish, was suddenly removed by his bishop and appointed assistant to another priest who could have gone for his grand-son almost. And what do you think was the reason for his being thus punished? Well, he was married and had, if I remember rightly, four chil-

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dren. When he first took charge of his parish he soon won his flock by few words and many good and noble deeds and it did not take long for the whole community to wonder how they could ever get along without him. Then, one Sunday morning, that priest had a great surprise for his flock. Like any decent man in his position would do under the circumstances, he told his parishioners that he thought he owed them an open confession. Then he went on telling them that soon after having taken charge of the parish he fell in love and that there was born a child unto them; he openly admitted he knew to be accused of having committed a 'crime' against the disciplinary laws of the Church, but he also knew, so he said, it to be much less a crime to leave the priesthood, to marry the mother of his child and to try to support his family in some respectable way. "So then," he said, "there is nothing else left for me to do than to

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leave you. Thank you for your many kindnesses and I wish you all happiness for the rest of your lives and for that other life to come." The parishioners simply would not let him go. He stayed and turned out to become a real father not only to his flock, but to the community at large as well. He made no secret of his having a family, of course, he could not boast of it, either. The local authorities, his friends, his bishop even knew all about the case and still, much to their credit, did not interfere, for they thought by rudely interfering they might be doing more harm than good. Then, all of a sudden, the bishop died. The new bishop, a young man, as soon as having taken charge of his diocese, removed the old priest, without giving the latter a hearing even. And the new bishop, you know, thought to have accomplished something great by thus humiliating the old man and by driving a mother and her children practically to the street.

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Of course, it would have made not much difference had the priest been in charge of a parish with a large income, enabling him to provide for his family plentifully; but the utter cruelty in this case is the more striking, the priest in question having been the practical supporter of his family.

Do you think God would ever approve of such a down-right cruelty? How could he? And do you perhaps think this little story stands by itself? It is a pity to say that this is but one out of a very large number.

It is hard to tell in one breath how many cruelties of the above kind and how many un-thought-of scandals could be wiped out by making celibacy optional. For there can be found but two ways of remedying this evil: either to change human nature, or to abolish celibacy. Something must be done, as no sensible person could deny with good reason. And we are at the eleventh hour, too. Human nature cannot be

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changed, so then celibacy ought to be done with. And this is not so much in the interest of the Roman priests themselves, as much more in that of Human Society as a whole. Discard forced rules and worn-out regulations, which, by the way, are contrary to reason and human nature as well.

The abolishment of celibacy can do the Church of Rome no harm, whatever. It will not shatter her discipline either, for church discipline lies with the individuals within her; nor can it endanger the wealth and power of the Roman Church, for like any other church, she needs neither. The word of Christ, so this very Church teaches, is the greatest power. "Heaven and earth will perish, but my words shall never perish."

So then, what is the use of wasting so much of valuable time with crowding down such a large number of good people just for the sake of maintaining the worldly power of the Church, which, to-day, one can hardly call anything but a chimera?!

### Alias Jimmy Valentine

**N**OT so very long ago I was to Coney Island just a few days before the closing of the season. It was an unusually nice and cool day and by this I remember that I was attracted by a venerable looking elderly gentleman wearing a frock-coat. I would have passed by without paying particular attention to his presence, had he not worn a handkerchief wound rather ostentatiously around his collar. Surmising that this so well be-handkerchiefed gentleman might be one of my brethren in Christ, I approached him asking what time it was and then we soon found ourselves amidst a vivid conversation. When leaving him I felt rather disgusted at the thought of why priests are made to lead a double life.

I have seen an archbishop make a trip to Coney Island. He wore, of course, his Roman collar and was careful to let

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people notice the purple rabbi underneath it.

I heard some people say it was a scandal for a priest to go to Coney Island. Well, why should an archbishop then be going there? If that resort appears to be a decent place of amusement, I do not see why priests should not go there. And if it is a bad place this is one more reason to let priests go to see it, lest they won't be able nor entitled to warn their people.

\* \* \*

Some time ago I was invited to a dinner. It was what we term a social affair and I was greatly pleased to meet there an Episcopalian priest in evening dress and wearing the sign of his profession, the collar buttoned on the back.

\* \* \*

I do not remember exactly when it was. It happened, anyway. I was on a mission trip. Before dinner my host, an old priest with an austere look, in-

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vited me to follow him up to the garret. I did so surmising he might want to show me his library, although I could not help wondering why he would not use one of the many rooms of more convenient access to that purpose. When arriving 'up stairs,' to my no little amazement, I have found no books at all. In the middle of the room there stood a very distinguished looking cupboard of the Old English variety, two or three rockers completing the furniture. I did not have to be guessing very long for my host hurriedly opened the cupboard and in no time had ready two 'small' glasses of whiskey. I refused with thanks. My elder brother in Christ did not try hiding his displeasure. And I could not succeed in making him understand that I would much rather go without liquor than take some stealthily.

\* \* \*

Temperance is a great thing and any person of half way sound reason would detest a drunkard. But it must be ad-

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ministered in moderate doses lest we might, by an over-dose, ridicule the great cause of moderate temperance. You might retort this to be a **contradictio in terminis**, but, I think, you will come to change your mind by observing how the temperance movement is being overdone and ridiculed, involuntarily of course, by its very advocates.

The other day I heard a friend of mine crack a few jokes. He began by asking rather funny questions. Then he gave me riddles to solve. And then, all at once, he asked me if I could tell him what local option really meant. I soon gave it up just to find out how easy the question was by my friend telling me that local option meant an argument about the question whether to sell liquors in saloons or in— —drug stores.

Of course, no one would take this joke as his **cynosure** in regard to temperance but I think absolute temperance is something impossible to carry out. And I also think whenever we want to eradi-

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cate an evil we must go about it very carefully, for if it is true that we can often profit from vice even, it is also true that the greatest virtue when overdone might result in vice.

If one cannot stand a drink he must leave it go. But if it is disgusting and degrading to get intoxicated then it is foolish to brand the moderate use of liquors a crime, immorality or misdemeanor even.

It is generally known that the great majority of human beings is rather inclined to take a drink once in a while. And what do you think is more proper: to take a drink with your meals or to get boosed on the quiet? Of course, it would be a most ideal state of affairs if there were no liquors sold, but if we ever are to reach that idealistic standard of social life, we must try to get there gradually, lest we will miss the mark and make articles out of ourselves.

Great things must be accomplished carefully and slowly if they are to be

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accomplished and not smashed to pieces. Good things come slow but sure. The time when people will take liquors just as they are now taking medicines will surely come if we will go ahead carefully.

There is absolutely no harm done in a priest's taking a drink with his meals, even in a public restaurant, nor is it wrong for him to smoke a cigar, if he feels he can do so without injuring his health and much less so if smoking might help his digestion.

Smoking is a matter of pure personal like or dislike and, parallel with the temperance movement, no genuine solution of the problem has been offered. For every physician to-day who calls smoking injurious, there are two or more others who will tell you that smoking is harmless if done with moderation. Even pure water is poison if used in quantities to make it so and then again potassium of cyanide, the most potent poison, is useful if taken as medicine.

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It is said tobacco has killed thousands. Well, alcohol then has killed tens of thousands.

Give me priests who will not attempt denying that they are human beings, who will attend social affairs, dinner-parties and banquets, who will go to concerts and theatres, who will amuse themselves decently with their fellow-men, providing they care for amusements and who will do so not in order to disturb those amusements with their very presence and their appearance of a hypocritical 'make up.' Splendid chances to show by their example how Christians ought to behave even while amusing themselves. And much needed, too.

The archbishop of one of the largest dioceses in the States recently forbade his priests under penalty of obedience to visit theatres. Shortly after this rather strong command was issued, the vicar-general of that very archbishop was seen in a box of a well-known New York theatre. They played 'The Con-

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fession,' which might serve as an excuse, and a legitimate one, too. The bishop's substitute was interested in this show because, so he said to the reporters, he was wondering how they would stage the confession. And after the show he was much pleased to admit he owed the author of the play much edification and clean amusement.

To forbid priests to visit theatres means to suppose they are going there with harmful intentions and to suppose such a thing, which could be done by fools only, would be an utter outrage. On the other hand to warn priests as to make their selection of plays carefully, would mean to suppose that they are not able to use sane judgment in that matter. This can be admitted without meaning any harm, for everybody is liable to make mistakes and priests are no exceptions in that.

You will so often hear priests thundering against theatres. And you would be surprised if you knew how very few of

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those anti-theatre-heroes have ever been inside of a theatre.

You remember Abraham Lincoln, don't you? And you also remember then his saying of everlasting avail which reads thus: "You can fool all the people for some of the time; you can fool some of the people all the time; but you cannot fool all the people all the time." Well, then, those talking of and preaching against things they do not know are trying to fool their audience.

The acme of the ministerial profession is to try to further betterment of mankind by good practical advice and, perhaps more so, by good example. Let the priests show the faithful that there is no harm in decent amusements and let them show that amusements, if honestly performed and properly taken, are very much like stimulants that make you enjoy your daily work the more and thus will induce you to put the stronger efforts into accomplishing the task of your daily walk.

## The House Next Door

**N**EIGHBORS are all very well as long as it is a question of doing them a good turn; but as soon as it comes to their helping you it is an entirely different thing.

When Mr. Smith's house caught fire, so the story goes, the first thing he did was to rush to ask help from his neighbors. He found there already two upon the scene. "Say, friends," he cried anxiously to one of them, "will you kindly rush to the corner and give the alarm whilst I get a few things out of the house?"—"Sorry brother," was the reply, "but I am bothered with rheumatism and cannot move".—"How about you?" said Smith to the other. "Would you mind running to the corner and shouting 'Fire'?"—"Very sorry," came the reply, "you see I am suffering from a stubborn sore throat and could not make any noise, if I tried all night."—"Oh, excuse

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me, gentlemen," retorted Smith, bowing sarcastically. "I am really sorry of having annoyed you. Suppose now," he added smilingly, "you go and fetch easy chairs and enjoy the blaze."

That is about the situation with Roman priests in many cases. If you had a chance to look into things as they are and if you have the courage to look on with open eyes and tell the results of your observations, no matter to what denomination you may belong, you will find to your utter dismay the so much talked-of and so much needed brotherly spirit to be rather lacking. Of course, this does not mean to say that this spirit is being wiped out entirely, but I mean to say that it is rather distorted. This is a very strange coincidence, but since it does exist, it ought to be reckoned and done with.

We are all human beings, more or less—and in most cases more than less—subject to all those little weaknesses that go with human nature. If

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we find an evil and want to remedy it we must, therefore, go down to its roots and use our pocket-knives if need be. This might hurt, but will bring forth very wholesome results.

Jealousy, in most cases, seems to be the reason of uncharitable talk and actions to be found among those claiming to be the very cream of the ministry taken as a whole. And jealousy is a most foolish attitude, for it will not do you any good, while in the meantime in all likelihood it will hurt your neighbor's feelings and injure his reputation, and in the end you will be doing harm to yourself by burdening your conscience with having caused unpleasant things to others which, in most cases, you could not remedy, no matter how hard you tried.

Priests can spoil a whole ministry by getting into the wrong attitude. There are many priests being handicapped in their work by getting jealous of those whom they think having what they call

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better appointments than their own. Bishop McDowell, head of the Methodist diocese, at the annual conference of his diocese held some time in October 1912, in Chicago, said: "There is no room for vanity, jealousy or grouch in a man's nature." Ministers of all Christian denominations would be doing well by paying heed to this warning.

How can anyone expect any priest to be led by the true spirit of charity while he himself is afflicted with an inclination towards vain-glory, jealousy or grouch? If there were no jealousies among priests, there could be found no misrepresentations, nor suspicions and calumnies. Priests really need not trouble themselves with suspecting or lowering each other, for there always are by the dozens people outside of the church only too ready to suspect and undercut them. And those suspecting, misrepresenting or blackening their brethren are not only doing them injuries, but in the end they will find to

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have undermined their own character also.

Broken china always shows the crack.

How easy it is to belittle someone and how very difficult it is to repair the harm done is shown by a little story as told once by a priest while preaching against uncharitable language.

“To illustrate to you what I have said,” so he went on, “just imagine my inviting you to follow me up to the steeple of our church, bringing along a pillow and a pair of scissors. How easy it would be for me to cut the covering of the pillow and let its contents go to the four winds. But what would you think of my asking you to pick up the down?”

Right next to jealousy stands intolerance. Ministers of all the different denominations ought to be looking upon each other as brothers and in this the Roman priests should be leading with good example, for, as you might well know, the Roman Catholic Church

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claims to be the strongest among all other denominations. And the stronger you are the more leniency you are supposed to show towards your brother who, as you might not know, is less strong without any of his fault.

What do you think makes the strength of this wonderfully great country? Nothing else and nothing less than the broad-minded generosity of Uncle Sam, leaving alone all the different nationalities as are coming to his shores.

The great melting pot is no joke, and it is not a story, either. It is only natural that if, while enjoying somebody's hospitality, your host will not interfere with your harmless little ways and usages you were brought up in, the longer you will stay with him the more you will find yourself compelled to not only acknowledge, but also to reward his gentleman-like demeanor. And this is the natural situation, for all those coming to the United States are supposed to contribute their share, no matter how

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little it be, towards the building up of this country. .

But the unnatural, utterly awkward, and as I dare say downright stupid situation is the one you cannot help noticing within the Church, unless you are blind. To-day you cannot make your neighbor believe he will be condemned unless he is or unless he will turn Catholic. You would commit yourself to the extreme by trying to keep up this worn-out opinion which, thank Heavens, belongs to the rather puzzling souvenirs of History. Denominational distinctions, however, seem almost necessary but should by no means result in actual separation. All Christians, ministers and faithful as well, are struggling for the same end. They all believe in God, and they all want to save their souls. Why, then, should they not pull together? The churches would gain by this; human society would get the benefit of it and Rome could not be losing any either. Even to the contrary. She

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might be losing in number, but she would certainly win in strength, for real power and strength does not lie with the multitude. It lies with Truth. And again I say, in establishing this brotherly spirit the Roman Church must take the lead. She is bound to.

Christ did not establish his church for the benefit or for the sake of a certain caste, but for **all**. And if the Roman Church is the church of Christ, then let her remain within her own boundaries. Missions as held for non-catholics in Roman churches might be instrumental in the increasing of the number of their following, but I think this to be rather improper, for it shows jealousy and looks very much like proselyting. Let those outside of the Roman Church join her by their own choice, and by that only, if they see fit to do so. Attract them by **deeds**, among which **patience and tolerance** are the foremost.

The Church of Rome ought to treat all denominations in the very way as she

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likes to be treated. The Church herself would fare better, although she should not be looked upon for herself not having been established for her own sake, and she would come by far nearer to accomplishing her great and noble task she is holding in common with all other denominations and which is the betterment of conditions and of ourselves.

In Beluchistan a physician has to take a dose similar to the one he prescribes for his patients.

## **The Climbers**

**A**N ignorant good man is the most dangerous of all. And it certainly shows ignorance if one is right along doing things which have nothing to do with his calling or profession.

Recently there was a rumor to the effect that King Victor Emmanuel of Italy intends assuming on his own motions the title of Emperor of Rome. Whether or not this is appropriate, while the value of titles seems to be rather on the decline, to decide upon must naturally be left with Italy. But it is beyond any doubt out of question that the alarm and attitude as shown by Roman Church-circles because of this rumor was altogether out of place. The Church of Rome should leave the different kingdoms and empires alone. Both parties would fare better and much absolutely useless 'diplomatic' scribble could be saved. The digging out of any histori-

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cal *fait-accompl*i can be of no avail to the Church and whether the king of Italy will be called Emperor of Rome, to remind us of the once existing Italian Empire with Rome as its capital, should really concern anybody but the Church.

Christ and his apostles had nothing to do with titles. Social distinctions as we know them to-day should not affect the spirit of Christ in the Church. To call, for instance, Cardinals 'Princes of the Church,' is a contradiction bordering absurdity. It is true we see permanently gross injustice being worked among men which makes it hard if not impossible to attain a fair impartiality, not to speak of equality. Distinctions always were and always will be and they are legitimate and to a certain extent necessary in order to keep up authority. But distinctions and titles should be looked upon and taken for a necessary evil only or, to use a more lenient expression, as things which cannot very well be avoided. In the Church, however, should be

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seen the least consideration for such things, more or less belonging to the play-things of mankind. An ordinary priest, it often appears, is able to do by far more for the Lord than many a high church dignitary.

Granted that the desire to get credit for one's good work is a disease, what then is the ambition for titles with a priest? And it is a quite frequent occurrence to see bishops allow and even to expect themselves to be addressed with 'Excellency' or 'Eminence' even. No one could deny this to be comical, at the best.

A certain archbishop, when returning from Rome as newly made Cardinal, upon his arrival was given a reception the flamboyance of which must have embarrassed himself, and on top of all that was being done in connection with this 'reception' there were, so it is said, spent thirty-five thousand dollars for the electrical display as applied on the new Cardinal's cathedral.

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Many priests are anxious to associate and like to be seen with 'society people,' but if asked what this might be good for and whether they should not give a little more attention to those ranking a little farther below, they would be at a loss for a satisfactory reply. A minister of the Gospel must have, at least to a certain extent, the spirit of a true shepherd. And if he will be running away from his flock at every little instance, then he must not blame his sheep when finding them rather estranged.

**Mundus titulis titillatur** is an old Latin saying, which means in English about as much as the world being tickled by titles. Motives showing the unbent desire to get credit for what one gives to the Church Treasury are reponsible for the utterly exaggerated importance as attributed to so-called church dignities, entitling their bearers to absolutely nothing else but to don robes of different shades and colors. Priests ought to be careful as to neat appearance, but

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should have no ambition to put on things which, especially if worn too freely, will make the on-lookers smile.

**Monism** means to concentrate all of one's qualities and abilities towards one and the same end. With priests this would mean to concentrate all their ambition towards the building up of the Church which can be imagined, if rightly taken, only upon the basis of the supreme law as laid down by Christ, telling us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**Moneyism** is a rather baffling tendency with the effect to do everything for the sake of material gain and not to do the least thing unless one gets paid for it in cold cash. The Siamese Phrá (monk), you know, would make himself guilty of a crime by accepting gifts, unless they are being offered him with both hands.

Last October the Catholic leaders of New York had arranged a peculiar meeting. A number of well-known Catholics

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of the Eastern metropolis, laymen and priests, convened in a room of the Hotel Astor, the vicar-general of the diocese presiding. Resolutions were passed and resolved and, . . . things, so it seems, will go on as ever before. At this meeting it was stated that immigrants of Irish and German nationality upon their arrival, are comparatively well taken care of, but those of all other nationalities need much to be looked after. This was not the first meeting of its kind and will not be the last one, either. But the immigrants do not need meetings, they need **deeds**, for they are not supposed to be coming here merely to make a living. They are entitled and welcome to make a **good** living and to **enjoy** it, too, but very naturally cannot reach up to this until made able to live up to the requirements of this country. The immigrants themselves, poor and mostly uneducated workingmen though they are, much to their credit, are trying hard to reach the level of the average American citizen

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and it is none of their fault if we see them making much slower headways than they could, would their leaders but take a hearty and practical interest in their well-being.

Poles, Hungarians, Italians, Slavs and all the others coming to these shores are looking up to their priests as natural leaders. The Irish and German comparatively are much better taken care of, their priests either knowing already the American language or not going into actual work until they have acquired some of it. But there are priests of all the other nationalities who after having lived in this country for a number of years know of the language of this country about just as much as they knew upon their arrival: nil. And such you will find by the dozens. And this is wrong, for without speaking its language, one can never learn to know a country and to be well acquainted with American life and its ways is a quality which cannot be dispensed with. Amer-

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ica being so much different from the European countries and especially from those of Middle Europe, the immigrants must be induced to learn our language and to become naturalized. They owe this, both, to this country and themselves as well. And this task lies with those acknowledged by the immigrants as their natural leaders: the priests.

Just take the Irish. When they first came to this country they were not any better than those we generally term 'Foreigners.' But they had the great advantage of the language and consequently it did not take them long to get acclimatized.

Conferences, so it seems, are being held just to 'show' that the immigrants are being looked after. They do not need empty conferences and **pour-parlers**. They need a hearty and practical interest which they, naturally, are seeking with their priests. But if one is hardly able to take care of himself you

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cannot very well expect him to be looking after others. Can you?

Priests as long as they will be and remain themselves perfect strangers in this country cannot advise those whom they are supposed to be leading into a new life.

As the only practical solution of this eminently national and economical problem, it seems, no priest should be admitted into practical work in the ministry unless able to make himself at least understood in the language of this country.

## Paid in Full

**I**T very often happens that the more you are expected to accomplish, the less reward is being kept in store for you. At times you know this and still will go ahead and turn out a hero. More often you are not quite aware of your professional altruism and get stung, just the same. In most cases, however, while cognizant of the situation indicating that you should be not expecting much of any tangible reward for doing the right thing, you will try to do it and make it pay. In such cases you are bound to turn an automaton.

To be very lenient in my calculation I would say about half of our priests are such automatons and, strange as it might seem, in quite a number of cases not only without any of their fault, but in spite of their good qualities.

To prove a failure does not necessarily mean to be wrong; in many cases it means to be too good.

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It is an old truth that the absolutely pure lacks strength and that which is strong enough to resist friction must needs lack absolute purity.

A wise doctor once said, nature limits her gifts to matters as to men.

That which is made clear, for instance, in dentistry by experience and practice, has been made clear in history, quite often, too. Many a good man has gone to the wall because he was too good; he might have lasted and been admired like an all-gold tooth among men, had he been of a little less purity and had there been more alloy in his nature so as to enable him to stand friction.

You will very seldom find men of pure gold protected by conditions to last in spite of their good qualities like a gold filling in the tooth would; while, on the other hand, you will too often find men of pure character, free from any alloy, turn incapable to compromise with their conscience and who consequently are either cast aside at the very beginning of

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their career as unfit for hard work or, if they insist, they will be destroyed. For, just like in dentistry a tooth made of pure gold could not be thought of, while if mixed with some baser metal, it would last for years and even out-wear his fellow-teeth; in the same way if a man's idealistically pure character is being mixed with the alloy of practical views of life and the energy to fight to disadvantage even, he will last and, perhaps, outwear his fellow-men. While a tooth made of pure gold is a thing nice to look at but of no practical avail, so men consisting of nothing but pure character are beautiful to look at but of very little, if any, practical avail.

Take, for instance, Pere Marquette, poor Joan of Arc, Savonarola or Giordano Bruno. They all lasted as long as they could. But they could not last because too good for the world's conditions.

Or take the man who really invented the sewing-machine. He is never heard

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of. While Singers and the public at large are getting the benefit of an idea, its inventor gave it up the moment his wife explained to him that his discovery would mean starvation to thousands of poor sewing women. In spite of this unusual honesty, however, you will not admire him, for he was too soft for this world.

Of course, it would be asking too much and it would be unjust to expect the priests to be free from and above all and any faults. But there are faults which ought to be over-come by all means. And the chief one is the lust for gain. For as soon as this evil begins to creep like a venomous fever into the system of those who are supposed to be dispensers of the riches of the mind, heart and spirit and consequently should be standing far above the sickly aim for wealth, hypocrisy will set in like a dry-rot followed by its accomplices such as cruelty, injustice, craftiness and

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personal conduct in many cases to beggar description.

To-day one needs not explain that brain work as a rule is just as hard as hardest toiling; in many cases—if not in most—it will work harder on the whole system, too. It is really hard to think of a task more difficult to accomplish and more inconvenient to carry out to the end than that of the true minister of the Gospel. Therefore, it would be unjust and foolish to deny priests a certain comfort of life. They are supposed to be dwelling in respectable surroundings, which are in keeping with their profession. And their body must be taken care of properly, too, so as to enable their minds to deliver goods cheerfully. But the remotest tendency towards luxury should be absolutely shunned. If priests could lift up themselves above the aim for financial reward, they would be practically continuing the gospel of Christ in this dollar-mad epoch of ours.

You will often hear of purses being

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offered various priests on different occasions. The idea is tolerable and, at times, offers itself as a delightful way of practicing charity. There are priests, comparatively very few though, whose incomes will scarcely cover their daily needs. If such a one is being presented with a purse, it is a justified means for bridging over the rather delicate situation. There might be and there are other cases in which the presentation of a purse is appropriate or passable, at least. But on the whole this has become a disease which might rightly be called **pursomania**. It is being overdone in some cases bordering utter foolishness. When the archbishop of New York returned from Rome a newly made Cardinal some two years ago, he was the recipient of a purse of twenty thousand dollars 'to defray his expenses.' Now the Cardinal did not pay his expenses individually, so this purse should have been offered the diocese; his incomes are so plentiful that he really does not

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need any financial assistance. He might have turned over this money to some charitable purpose. Granted. This does not alter the awkwardness of the situation. Not in the least, because in that twenty thousand dollars there was included a great deal of money needed by the poor. And suppose a few rich people had subscribed that amount, even this would not make things look much better, because it does not look good, anyway, if some one gets paid for the same work twice or if he is given the money for what has been paid for already by others.

The Church is supposed to be working on the quiet and show people how to avoid bluffing. To bluff, originally, meant to play a harmless joke or trick on somebody; to-day bluff means to fool somebody, to take advantage of him or to swindle him even.

It is very hard to find just the right mixture of gold and alloy. The many hangings, quarterings, beheadings and

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bon-fires are telling the sad tales of men or women of pure gold used in the wrong place. For not all that glitters is gold.

One cannot expect human beings to be perfect, but they must be decent.

Just examine closely the life of Washington or even Lincoln. Under the test of History's acid these great men will turn black, too, for there was a sufficient quantity of alloy in their natures. But it was this alloy that enabled them to stand all the friction of fighting and of hard work.

Humanity, in time, might devise some kind of protection for its improvement that even men of pure and golden character could survive and succeed against the metallic friction of life and then we will have real leaders and true teachers. Not a minute sooner. Until the arrival of that happy moment those who to-day are supposed to be leaders of their fellow-men must speed the day on which the golden men might find con-

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ditions protecting them against the so many and often unexpected frictions of life.

If you have ever come to think of the many failures which could have been much in the world's successes had their metal been less pure, then you could not help thinking of the larger number of successes due to bad qualities.

Avoid both. Try to get just the right dose of alloy and keep to the *juste milieu*.

## **The House of a Thousand Candles**

**W**HEN Christ founded his church he must certainly have had in mind a church for all. "Catholic" as derived from the Greek word **Katholikos** means **universal**, that is, all are admitted to join her if they so choose. The adjective **Roman** was added in the course of time by man only, and it took quite some centuries before this epithet became generally known.

Cardinal Farley, head of the Roman Catholic diocese of New York in a speech delivered at the laying of the corner-stone of a certain church not so very long ago, openly expressed his hopes for the Catholic Church soon to become **the church of this Country**. The public at large, somehow or other, did not pay much attention to the Cardinal's rather inopportune venture, one of the big daily papers, however, passed the remark that the attitude as expressed by

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the Cardinal's speech ought to be reckoned with. It seems we are living in too busy a period, or else this topic ought to have caused a rather serious discussion.

"This has as not yet become an issue," you might retort, so I surmise. But this very same retort shows where the trouble will come from.

Had the government of Louis XVI of France not waited until the general dissatisfaction had become an issue, the French Revolution could have accomplished by far more, for then this greatest and most important move in the history of recent ages could have been carried out with much less of useless blood-shed and with much more of careful consideration. And had Rome, for instance, not waited until the irrelevance of the so-called Church-Empire had become an issue, it would have ceased to exist long before 1870, and this much to the credit of the Church and still more to the benefit of Christianity.

If we will wait until matters important

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become an issue then, as a rule, it will either prove too difficult to carry out the issue successfully, or, with still more likelihood, it will cause perplexity, not to speak of the heavy sacrifices thus squandered uselessly.

Is there, then, any danger in the Catholic creed's becoming that of this country? Very much so. And, strange to say, this danger is threatening not the respective country only, but the Church herself as well.

The Church of Christ was not founded for Christ's sake, and much less so for her own sake. If it was really Christ himself who founded what we term to-day the Church of Rome, he could have considered nothing else and nothing less than the welfare of mankind.

To see how imminent the danger as hinted at might become, just take for instance France, Spain, Portugal and, last but not least, Italy. As soon as the Church begins dabbling with politics with the open or hidden purpose of

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gaining worldly power, she is betraying her divine founder and master; while on the other hand, if she would satisfy herself with teaching the ignorant, helping the poor and consoling those who are afflicted, the spirit of true humility prevailing, she were bound to turn out to be the greatest benefactor of mankind.

If we believe that there will nothing happen without God's at least so permitting, we should certainly praise God's infinite wisdom for having put an end to the worldly power of the Church. The 20th of September 1870, when Rome ceased to be the capital of the so-called Church Empire, is an historical date similar to the first Good Friday. Both remind us of sacrifice. Christ was crucified, thus making his death the ever abundant source of salvation; the Church was deprived of her worldly power, thus getting a splendid chance for self-humiliation. In both instances a rather strong dose of sacrifice was needed and it is up to the Church to

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make the best of the second instance for humanity's sake.

The Church must be standing way above politics in general, and party politics in particular. The running of a country or a political party and the furthering of the teachings of Christ are two entirely different propositions. Just as you will never succeed in trying to mix oil with water, so the interfering of the Church with politics necessarily must prove a failure.

The Church of Christ being run by human beings, those in charge must not think themselves to be superior entities; as a matter of fact they are servants of Christ and also of the greatest public cause which spells human life and means real charity.

You often find Protestants worry over the numeric increase of Catholics. Catholic families in general have a larger increase, but this should not make the Protestants worry: let the Catholics do the worrying, for in proportion with

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their numeric growth, their responsibility will be greater also.

It is easy to recognize greatness, but it takes grace to recognize greatness and by the latter I mean to admit that the mission of the Church is by far superior to individuals.

A priest in charge of a prominent New York parish openly said that all the Catholic Church in America expects from her priests is that they be energetic organizers and successful managers and quite a few bishops would hold that they need shrewd business men above all. Where in the blue blazes does the spirit of Christ then come in?

A well known Divine said the other day, churches in seeking a pastor seem to be asking for everything except the qualification whether he is a man of God. He must be a good organizer, a good preacher and a good 'mixer'; the same qualities that we might have in order to superintend a packing house.

The material development of the day

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fixing the thought of the people on things material seems to be the reason that this **material tendency** is making itself so sadly noticeable in the Church. The idea of God as Father seems to be losing practical avail in consequence of which we often fail to take men as brothers. Still, the idea of God is at least as necessary to service as it is to worship.

Bishops in making their appointments ought to consider first of all the qualification of the respective priest as a man of God. If this would be the case one could not so often come across priests whose short-comings and mis-givings are not only tolerated, but often covered with the mantle of their financial successes.

Priests ought to be more, by far more practical in their sermons. To be a good preacher means to get a practical hold of the audience. Threshing over and over again passages of the Scriptures as known by heart by almost everybody might be an easy way of killing time,

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but it has nothing in common with the profession of a priest. Talk to them in a way within the boundary of their average comprehension, and release them from the fearful impression as if the Church were an institution standing way above them: tell them that **they are** the Church.

Many, not to say most of the priests, satisfy themselves with memorizing outlines of sermons as printed in certain periodicals. This is unjust and utterly foolish, for the priest is not supposed to show his parishioners what he had learned, but he is expected to tell them what they need. To be a good preacher takes brain-sweat, but it seems as if there were not a few priests whose brains never perspire.

The oath against modernism as taken, forcibly of course, from the Catholic Priests some two years ago, was impractical and unwise and one can boldly say without the least fear of exaggeration that a very large portion, if not the ma-

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jority, of the priests thus were compelled to perjury. Modernism in the proper sense is a good thing, and much needed, too. And, although this might seem a contradiction, modernism and conservatism go splendidly together if one knows how to handle them. Modernism means to pay heed to changes and circumstances as we see them develop; modernism in the Catholic Church then would mean keeping pace with a sound and necessary **evolution**; while conservatism in this instance means to keep away from the people all that might lead them into a hasty **revolution**. The Church, therefore, ought to instruct her priests as to how to apply modernism.

Mysticism at times will come in very handy, for it will lift us up above the struggles we have to face in our daily walk. The dignified display in church services is a useful thing. And it is nice and justified too, for churches are houses of God and places of worship, anyway. But this should not be over-

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done lest we want to be running the risk of making those services remind us of theatrical displays. Gorgeous displays in church services are certainly not in keeping with the spirit of Christ and they mean wasting money, which could be applied so much better for charitable purposes.

The Church ought to be very careful in avoiding all that could make her suspicious of caring for wealth. If one considers the high cost of living and the thousands of those practically starving, one cannot help reaching the conclusion that all that is being done in the line of spectacular displays in church services, if trespassing the limits of the necessary dignity of a house of worship, is a crime much rather, than an act pleasing God. The display in church services as being observed by the High Episcopalians ought to be the limit.

Truly, there is much of inspiration in the Catholic church services. Just take for instance that very plain and simple

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song as sung when benediction is given: "O salutaris hostia." And we need quite some inspiration, too, lest our best qualities be absorbed by our more or less business-like cares. But we should never let go those inspirations to such an extent as to make us their blind tools.

## Fine Feathers

**H**ERE is a red feather.  
It might be of some little interest to our fair American sisters to know, how the Countess of Warwick happened to turn soicalist.

From her childhood she was accustomed to move around the royal court along with those standing in the centre of fashionable life. In Hearst's Magazine of last October Lady Warwick confessed to having enjoyed the sparkle and gaiety of society. She did enjoy being attracted by the glitter and sunshine of idle life which she thought was neither evil nor harmful. "Indeed, if life is not to be a happy thing, there is surely no rational argument why one should go on living it."

A sudden mental shock then awoke her from her idle dreams and she came to see cold reality staring her in the face

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through her early thoughtless enthusiasm.

At the time when Count and Countess Warwick were busy preparing for their house-warming, which they wanted to make something altogether out of the ordinary, there was great distress in England.

The ball at Warwick Castle, according to the papers, was a great success. But Lady Warwick's proud joy was quite disturbed. When going through her mail the next morning she happened to come across the Clarion, a weekly periodical she never had heard of before, there she found an item printed concerning her ball. She grew very indignant and as soon as she was through reading that article she repaired for the editor's office, ready to overpour him with the outbursts of her anger. Small wonder, for then she was enjoying 'society life' at full speed.

As soon as she had found the editor she reprimanded him for the unfairness

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and untruthfulness of his publication. "Why, our ball has given work for half of the county and to dozens of dress-makers in London," so she said indignantly. The silent man at the desk looked calmly at the Countess. "If you will sit down I will tell you why you are so mistaken about this wasteful luxury of yours and your sweet set." Lady Warwick did sit down and Robert Blatchford, editor of the *Clarion*, began telling her straight from the shoulder just what he, as a socialist, a democrat and an economist thought of all her creed of charity and bazaars and Lady-Bountifulness. He went on and on tearing her idols, one by one, into pieces. When Blatchford quit talking Lady Warwick left his office a dazed woman and on her way back home to Warwick Castle she knew that a crisis had arrived in her life. But it took quite some time before she was able to master the whys and wherefores of the new ideas. And it took much of hard work before she

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was certain that socialism was the only solution of the problem of poverty.

Of course, it is quite hard to believe Lady Warwick a convinced socialist, but it is much to her credit that she admits to have been working and playing on wrong lines. And, by the way, socialism as Lady Warwick puts it, certainly is not the only solution of that most important one of all problems, grinning at us wherever we may turn. But if socialism and the Catholic Church, by mutual condescension, could reach a point of understanding, and as consequence of this could lift up each other to the height of a hearty co-operation, we might get quite near to the solution of that problem.

Bazaars, fairs and other entertainments of the kind as being held for the benefit of churches, orphans' asylums, hospitals and the like, ought to be turned into practical deeds of real charity, and should cease being looked upon as 'social affairs' more than anything else.

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Here is a white feather.

Madame F. A. Pezet, wife of the Peruvian Minister to the United States, says votes for woman means better homes, that the campaign for suffrage does not interfere with Peruvian mothers raising families, and that American society will be forced to recognize the business-woman as equal to the woman of inherited wealth and position.

Miss Jane Adams, manager of Hull House, Chicago, one of our most interesting women, talking of woman's suffrage holds that only through nation and state, reacting upon each other, can we attain a code of legislation fitted to control the abuses of our social and industrial system and to maintain a standard of living, which we shall be proud to call American.

And then comes the Chicago Examiner stating rather authoritatively that the women of this country will have the right to vote—and they will have that right soon. “Any man”—so the Exam-

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iner—"who opposes votes for women is narrow-minded and worse; the woman who opposes woman's suffrage is a doll, a professional parasite, or a lackadaisical clinging vine," whatever this might be.

This is a nice selection. Is it not? Sounds very nice, too, but is quite wrong, all the same.

The day of woman's suffrage is coming. It was bound to come for some time. But do not hasten its arrival. Let it come its natural, quiet but sure way.

It is true that at the present time when women are being forced into business life and into doing much of what was once termed man's exclusive work, it seems only natural that they should have more reasons for voting on things that pertain to their lives, their conditions of livelihood and their health. But this does not mean, not in the least, to hurry head-over-heels into the practical application of a question, the solution of which as yet we do not quite know how

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to manage. It is often being said women are the better half of human race. True. But this is one more reason why to go slow in order to make sure.

The time, when women were taken as mere ornaments of the household or as pets, today belongs into the sphere of vague, historical remembrances. We not only take woman as man's equal, but we openly admit her to be ranking first. This condition of things is very likely responsible for our unwritten law of 'Ladies First.' It is true that supporters of woman's suffrage usually are the best men. But it is also a truth of eternal avail and of infinite importance that the noblest duty of woman is that of mind-ing the household and the highest praise any woman should crave for is that of having raised good children.

Miss Addams apparently forgot to mention one very important and useful factor in controlling the abuses of life. And this is the church. The church ought to take a lively interest in wo-

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man's suffrage and this not so much as to hasten its coming than more as to keep it within its boundaries and prevent it from going to extremes, dangerous to the well-being of human race in general and that of this country in particular. And special care should be given to reducing of the ridiculous distinction between business women and ladies of society. For, verily, every woman considering and taking herself instrumental in furthering human civilization is a **Lady**, no matter of what parentage, occupation or social standing.

\* \* \*

And here comes a blue feather.

Our grandmothers, or at least our great-grandmothers extracted sweet solace from a clay pipe, but until the last decades this was accounted for as an evidence of the hardihood of the 'good old time.'

Recently some priests, quite a few, make it their point to thunder from the pulpit against moderate drinking and

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smoking. The latest fad is to preach against women smoking. The fact that many of the ladies of the royal courts in Europe are confirmed smokers, especially so in Russia, might not amount to very much with you; but if I tell you that the wife of one of the candidates for the recent presidential election felt called upon to deny that she was a smoker, this might go with you as striking evidence how rapidly the use of tobacco among American women is growing. Of course, it has been spread almost unnoticed, because very few women smoke from the house-tops. Smoking is a fad among women and if indulged in quantities with reason and in proper time and place, there should be no more cause for opposition than to playing cards, attending champagne-suppers or late dances.

To get again on equal terms with the kind reader, I should say our fair American sisters ought to go without cigarettes, without playing cards and cham-

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paign-suppers or late dances. But at the same time it seems as if the occasional whiff from the care-dispelling, soothing cigarette were the less harmful of these 'evils.'

To-day women of almost all castes and conditions and particularly so of the younger generation are taking up smoking, and the women of distinguished social standing regard smoking as a necessity rather than as a luxury.

The luxuriant sense of **complaisance** and the calming narcotism of the mild smoke in the form of a cigarette has caused many of the gentler sex to indulge in its pleasures.

As to smoking in general the kind reader has found our views in one of the foregoing chapters. As a matter of fact, however, smoking of women is rather suggestive, and harmless though it might appear, ought to be interfered with. And here again the wise and **moderate** influence of the church would come in very handy. It is, of course, hard to set fixed

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rules in that regard. But it can hardly be denied that with the church taking a hearty interest in temporizing the question of woman's suffrage and all that goes with it, it should not be so very hard keeping our women upon the pedestal of the so much talked-of and so often envied **American Lady**.

## **The Third Degree**

**R**ECENTLY quite a few of our best known men declared rather emphatically that the generation to come would be a monstrous improvement on the present one. This shows we are anxiously expecting the future generation to make good for the one of our day. But if one will take the pains to study the situation, revelations will present themselves to make any man of reason perceive the coming generation **could** be an improvement, were we not planting the seeds of a harvest with very little hope to reap wheat from a sowing of tares, and so the prospects are rather poor and discouraging.

One of our foremost physicians not so long ago launched an idea by which the matrimonial contract might be placed on a physical basis as protection against deformities, insanity and imbecility. Among the many pros and cons were

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queer ones, too. A certain Divine, for instance, condemned the very idea of that suggestion as a 'Sacrilegious' one, claiming that it would eradicate all the purity, sweetness and sanctity in the divine law of matrimony. It is, of course, not safe to say what the manner of that reverend gentleman in looking at such affairs might be; still, would our doctor's plan be carried out stringently, persons in any way seriously imperfect could be prevented from entering into marriage and this as no one will doubt, to no little benefit to human race and especially to the coming generation itself.

In the face of statistics revealing the daily increase of insanity, vice and crime in general, one will find it obvious that some remedy ought to be applied and this as quick as possible, and in order to understand the situation fully, we need not resort to official reports and systematic statements. We just have to interest ourselves in the conditions around us.

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We may have reformers by the score, but if we have not the co-operation of the parents themselves, then all efforts of the church even will prove useless. The young must be taught the truth about those mighty complex problems of life and sex as soon as their natural curiosity demands an explanation; and this burden lies principally with the mothers.

George Broadhurst's *Bought and Paid For*, called a 'drama of the day,' gives us a few instances as regards mothers. The play is rather overdone, of course, but one can learn from everything. In this play there are two types of illiterate strugglers to whom money is everything and this is given poignancy by a ruthless exposure of the sufferings of the wretched wife.

"After all, dear," says the coarse-grained sister of that woman, "he is your husband and that makes it right, does it not?" "No," replies the wife, "it

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only makes it legal . . . and the legal thing isn't always the right thing."

Tableau.

On the 25th of October last the New York papers had an item stating that on that day there were no applications for divorce filed at the New York courts. This was generally taken for 'very interesting.' So you can see how fast we are going down and it should be easy to imagine just how far we will get if the speed toward the abyss will be kept up.

When pointing to an evil, naturally we will be looking for some remedy. We must have happy marriages in order to find an improvement with the generation to come. This is a fact which ought not to be tampered with. The question only is how to get there?

If something goes wrong and we want to remedy it, we must also know the reason of the decay.

The Catholic Church has been doing a great deal of good in the line of remedying marriages; but then again has

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smashed to pieces many an innocent life by too strict application of her laws and rules. There are certain 'impediments' prohibiting or invalidating marriage if entered in spite of them. Cousins, for instance, up to the fifth degree of kinship, are not allowed to marry.

In certain cases parties involved in such impediments will be allowed to enter into marriage upon payment of certain fees, called 'dispensation taxes.' It would be wrong and unfair to think such taxes to be charged merely for the sake of raising money, for as a matter of fact, these very taxes often are instrumental in preventing foolish or unhealthy marriages. But in the long run this proves as being overdone, for it often happens that in cases where this would be more than indicated, the parties concerned are denied the dispensation merely because unable to pay the fees.

The question of divorce and the mutual relation of husband and wife again

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are two questions presenting themselves as of utmost importance. Matrimony is not only a sacrament in the Catholic Church, but is being held as something sacred even by the savages. If matrimony would be allowed to be taken for and looked upon as the result of the mere attraction of the opposite sexes, then Almighty God might come to find out what tremendous a mistake he made by creating our world, after all.

Wars as threatening the country with devastation and ruin, epidemics, earthquakes and—well, take the most dreadful disasters you could think of—are but trifling matters in comparison with the mixed-up stage of matrimony as prevailing in our day. For marriage is supposed to be the foundation and source of happiness not only for those immediately concerned, but for the public at large as well. Those who are about to get married should, therefore, avoid making mistakes, for thoughtlessly contracted marriages will not only make

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miserable the whole life of the contracting parties, but might also spoil and ruin the life of those most dear to them.

Where the trouble really lies is not easy telling. It seems quite plain, however, if men would sum up the merits and demerits of their prospective brides and if women would be doing the same before getting married, the situation would be quite different and by far not as bad as it is.

To-day we have to face a tendency of which but twenty years ago one would never have dreamed. I mean the 'freemasonry' of wives. It often happens that when one lady asks another lady to do a certain thing and the first lady avers that she cannot do it until she asks her husband's permission, the other lady will wisely smile and know that the party of the first part is simply using a polite excuse to get out of doing something that she does not want to do. Now, please, read this sentence over again, then replace the female nouns with male ones.

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And there you are.

"How to choose a wife?" was the topic of a prominent Chicago preacher some time last fall. The general idea of his sermon was that common-sense should be the main consideration, but it should be mixed with love. In the course of his sermon that certain divine called men's attention to be looking for health, intellectual capabilities and a good general disposition in a girl they expect to marry and wants them not to forget woman's attitude toward marriage and Christianity. Rather strong, is it not? But then again can you accuse of selfishness a man who is careful to gain happiness through marriage? Is he not doing this more for the sake of his future wife and family than his own?

There is noticeable a rather strong leaning towards idealizing womanhood. The trouble is that we only think we are idealizing womanhood, while in fact we are idolizing women.

It would be of by far greater benefit

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than one could tell had we uniformity of laws regarding marriage and divorce. The Federal Government ought to control the entire matter. Intended marriages ought to be given the widest possible publicity. No divorce should be granted except on scriptural ground and last, but not least, abandonment of wife by husband ought to be declared felony and prosecuted mercilessly.

One error caused by misplaced affections and lack of knowledge of the laws of life and the lack of the right instruction from a sensible mother does not mean that a girl is bad or wicked or unworthy of a man's trust and confidence. And the same is the case with young men.

### **The Easiest Way**

**S**UPPOSE you are in charge of an important position, and suppose you and hundreds of your kind are working hard on the same line and in the long run, when looking for returns, you will find left nothing but your good will and this tampered with, too. There will be but two ways presenting themselves for you to get out of such a rather ticklish situation: you will either admit that you were careless, lazy or ignorant, or you will take the much easier way of blaming others for the failure.

The Roman Church is in no way above the influences of men and times. But then again she should not be ruled by them. If the Church, as she often claims, is supposed to be taking care of entire humanity and if you happen to find out there is something wrong with humanity, you can certainly not blame the latter alone, if at all.

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That there is general dissatisfaction prevailing among Catholics only a superabundant fool could deny, and the attitude of the Church by which to blame human society solely can be seen by anybody but the blind. In Catholic churches lately there is being preached so much against smoking, drinking, women's suffrage, immodest attire, white slavery and against who on earth knows what else, that it almost seems as if those thundering sermons were being let loose in order to distract people's attention from what it ought to be really called to. The Catholic Church is making a dreadful mistake by keeping on terrorizing people and by this attitude she will be accomplishing just the contrary to what she is supposed to be standing for. It is easy to cause confusion by terrorism and false accusations, but those doing so should bear in mind that they will have to stand full responsibility.

Granted that the faithful of the fairer sex would attend church services in

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what is termed immodest attire, who is to be blamed for this first of all? If a church is being run properly; if people will be getting what they need and what they are looking for: plain truth; if the least sign of hypocrisy will be bared from the pulpit, then the faithful will come to find out by themselves their church to be a house of worship and will either keep away, or will attend services in modest attire, because feeling it to be against good forms to go there in order to attract undue attention. To-day we all know, although we much dislike to admit it, that we have come to make distinctions between church and church. It often happens that whole families will leave the church they were practically brought up in and join another, merely because the latter is 'more stylish.' I wonder what religion has got to do with style?

At times it almost seems as if man not always were a thinking animal. We often seem to be acting by the sheer urg-

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ency of undefined forces. The brute does not see or foresee the end of its action. But man does and, therefore, is bound to prevent impending cataclisms. The brute is a powerless slave of environments which, at least to a certain extent, are being mastered by man. And the larger an influence one has with his environments, the greater his responsibility.

There could be hardly found another institution having had for the past nineteen centuries such strong an influence with environments than the Catholic Church. She almost succeeded in mastering ages, but whether or not this can rightly be called real success, is an entirely different proposition.

And it should be not so hard to remedy the great dissatisfaction as prevailing within the Church of Rome and her American following, too.

The mutual relation between the Church and her faithful as existing to-day is rather absurd. There are approx-

## **Behind the Curtain**

imately fifteen million Catholics living in the States. They have contributed for so-called church-property over a thousand million of dollars and are being crowded down to such an extent that they are being taught, and if needs be, openly told, to pay and to shut up. As the natural result of such a situation many bishops and priests would do just as they please and it is sad to say that oppression, graft and riotous and scandalous living are not exceptional occurrences.

No one is supposed to buy rights or privileges of the Church. But all those contributing to her support naturally do acquire certain rights as regards the administration of church-property. The Council of Trent (1545-1563), the decisions of which still do constitute the law of the Catholic Church openly says, the administrators of such church-properties can be priests as well as laymen. (*"Administratores fabricae cuiusvis ecclesiae tam ecclesiastici quam laici esse pos-*

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sunt"). This means that such properties can be administered either by clergy alone, or by clergy and laymen, or by laymen alone. The first Catholic Bishop in the States, John Carrol, patriot and revolutionary soldier, and later archbishop of Baltimore, in 1803 decreed and maintained that all property should be held by the contributing lay-members and should be administered by lay trustees as elected by the members of the respective congregation. Such conditions of affairs could be only beneficial to all parties concerned. In 1829, when the First Baltimore Council of the Catholic bishops in America convened it was decreed that "all church-property should be on the name of the respective bishops." Subsequent Councils but confirmed the rule which was supposed to be a very wise one.

Later on most of the bishops had bills introduced in various legislatures granting them special privileges and taking away from the people all rights just as

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any real corporation, trust, or monopoly would do. And this was being done, so it is asserted, without the previous knowledge of the people concerned.

Small wonder, therefore, that congregations begin to be demanding the recall of these privileges and the restoration of their rights to them.

The bishops holding the title to all church properties (lands, churches, schools, priests' houses, teachers' residences and cemeteries even) in most cases are the sole owners and do just as they please, the people who paid for it all being practically 'frozen out.'

Considerable portions of the tremendously large sums as raised for the purpose of purchasing church-property are being spent for anything but that end. In the Middle West there is a church the pastor of which contracted an indebtedness of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars to build a church which cost one hundred fifty thousand. The enormous balance of six hundred thousand dollars

## **The Third Degree**

thus left was 'invested' rather recklessly in speculation in gold mines, stock-exchange and gambling. It is said this priest was 'backed' by his bishop, but it is also known that the latter backed out in due time and the congregation had to come up for the 'trifling' loss. This is one case out of many, if you please. And what are the people getting by all this? Under threat of excommunication they have to pay heavy taxes and special assessments for the maintenance of church property, in many cases without even being cognizant of the financial standing of their parish.

Priests but in a very few exceptional cases are good businessmen. And they cannot be expected to be such either, having not been educated for a business-career. This is one reason why the administration of church-property should be left with the laity. This was formerly the case under the wise administration of archbishop Carrol and it worked very well. Another reason why bishops and

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priests should have but the right of supervising financial affairs is that most of the troubles and difficulties can be traced back to disagreements on matters financial.

In some states bishops have established 'legal corporations,' "so as the people may have a voice," being careful to point out to the people this to be a special privilege. Such corporations when seen on the stage would appear as farcical, in practical life, however, they are an outrage covered with hypocritical kindness. These corporations, to be sure, consist of five members: bishop president, his vicar-general vice-president, pastor secretary and treasurer and two laymen trustees. The lay trustees are supposed to be elected by the people, but their nomination must have the pastor's approval, and their election again must be approved by the bishop in order to be valid. Then again the bishop can, whenever he so pleases, remove the lay trustees and replace them with others

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that will suit him. Suppose now the pastor would really let the congregation elect these lay trustees without any interference on his part, and suppose the bishop would not remove them, even had they incurred his displeasure, what does their existence amount to? Practically nil. For even if they should happen to be familiar with church affairs, legal transactions and all that goes with running 'a church corporation,' they always would have against them the majority of priests.

Complaints to the bishops by laymen in most cases are of no avail. And when troubles begin growing too thick, then comes the last argument: 'obey, or you will be excommunicated.'

Recently two Catholic congregations in Pennsylvania have sued their bishop for the return of the title to their church-property. After an expensive and long fight in the courts, decisions were rendered in favor of the people, the judges deciding and the supreme court approv-

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ing that the title to the property of each congregation should be vested in whomever the majority of the contributing members ('pew holders') of the congregation shall choose. In both cases these congregations chose themselves as owners. They were promptly excommunicated. And there was considerable smiling done, for two reasons. Some smiled because they have won, others did the same because of the excommunication. In fact the respective bishop is the one who should have been excommunicated, for the question of church-property is not a religious question at all. This is a financial question, pure and simple. An economical question, which the Government cannot ignore.

The legislatures should not grant privileges to a few, detrimental to the whole. And where such special privileges have been granted, it is the duty of the respective legislatures to abolish them and to establish order. This to do will prove the much easier as such ac-

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tions of various legislatures are said to be due in most cases to mis-information.

What the legislatures have done, the legislatures can undo, by which again the Catholic Church would be given a chance for undoing things which never should have been done.

## The Thunderbolt

**I**T will happen at times that you have an idea without having at hand the right word to express it with. In such cases you either coin or borrow one. Being rather afraid not to be able to invent one so exactly fitting than the one which I can borrow, I shall do the latter.

**Zeitgeist**, as you will see, is a German word, but it has been naturalized, because there seems to be no adequate word covering the idea so precisely. Just as we could not translate 'spleen' into German, we could not translate **Zeitgeist** into English. So we might as well simply take it without making ourselves guilty of having appropriated other's property, for language like electricity, as Elbert Hubbard says, is for the purpose of transmission.

**Zeitgeist** then means that great mass of ideals, tendencies, opinions, hopes and fears characteristic of a certain

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epoch. And there is no one exempt from the Zeitgeist. No public opinion, no rules and no laws contrary to the Zeitgeist can hold out. We will find, for instance, judges construe, interpret and translate laws to suit the Trend of Times. This Trend of Times is all in the direction of enlightened self-interest. The unwise being blamed for good, we prosper personally in the same measure as we will minister to the well-being of others. Our Zeitgeist tells us, rather emphatically, that a transaction where both parties are not benefitted is immoral.

Summing up the foregoing few sentences, we cannot help reaching the conclusion that the Zeitgeist is a thing to be reckoned with, even by the Church of Rome.

The old-time inquisitors tortured their kind for religion's sake: the modern ones are doing it in the name or rather under the pretext of public welfare, but the inhumanity, the callousness and the

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inborn savage love for cruelty in both cases are the same.

To get to the point let us take into consideration that God condemns nothing, because in everything there is a portion of him. Man is a creature of God, so then, how on earth can any sensible person endeavor to make you believe God would create something just to throw it away? Where then would the 'image and likeness of God' come in?

To look at non-catholics in general and at the Masonic organizations in particular as inferior beings, because 'less good,' thanks to our Zeitgeist, is not only an attitude utterly unbecoming the Catholic Church, but this is ridiculous, unjust and mean as well.

To-day every educated person knows that all Christian denominations are struggling for the very same end. And we also know that the Masonic organizations are accomplishing a great deal of good in many lines: they are fraternal organizations with no other aim and

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purpose than to help those of their fellow-men who need assistance and who appeal to them.

To laugh, for instance, at the Salvation Army, would not only show utter lack of common-sense, but that of decency as well. The late General Booth and his organizations are being looked upon as eminent benefactors of mankind, and no person claiming good education would dare ridicule them without being pitied or smiled at, at the best.

To take Christian Science for a passing fad would be utterly absurd. It lies with our Zeitgeist to pass judgment on things we do not know, for we have too many 'Smart Alecks.' But if you know just a little of Christian Science then, if you are a gentleman, the least you can do is to leave Christian Scientists alone. If you know quite some of this comparatively new religion, then you will encourage it, for if you were given the privilege of taking a glimpse into its annals, you would be surprised of its puri-

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fyng influence and you could not help lifting your hat in grateful recognition in behalf of all the many drunkards, gamblers, cigaret-fiends and others saved and brought back to themselves by Christian Science.

Those we call heretics have their own conception of Truth and if they will openly tell us they cannot accept a creed, which is so ignorant of its tenets as to condemn all those who do not follow it, they are deserving but our respect.

Do you not think it to be ridiculous for the Roman Church to continue thundering with her vetoes and punishments of excommunication against our fellow-men, while her very founder is telling us "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

And do you think there is any difference between Christ's doctrine and its application? Quite so. Christ, you see, with his doctrine, left no place for differing sects; whilst Saint Paul with his very method of applying that doctrine serves as authority for the establishment of any

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and every quarrelsome sect you ever knew.

The reasons of work are not for the worker to determine: they rest with God.

Intolerance is foreboding heavy punishment and disaster. "It is better to tell the truth and go out of the Church, than to remain in her as a liar and a hypocrite." It takes an intolerant bigot to consider persons believing devoutly in Christ, but refusing to accept Roman Church authority atheists, and not to hesitate calling them such.

Just take for instance France. When the difficulties between that country, once called 'Protector of Faith,' and the Church of Rome arose, the worn-out thunder of Rome—the very same which not so long ago tried to make a feeble noise in America—has rolled through France as a solemn protest against discussion which, according to Roman policies, can not be tolerated. And what was the result? Well, to-day all intellectual

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forces of France, practically speaking, are standing on their hind legs ready to jump upon priestcraft: atheism and materialism with all their witty and domineering insolency, are practically ruling that once so eminently Catholic country.

As long as we are seeking the pure and good, the courageous and truthful as taught by the God-Man, there is no condemnation. No priest, no bishop, not the Pope even can righteously condemn anyone. "Let any priest tell me that I am not a child of God, and I will retort that he, by such utterance, has proven himself a child of the devil." Nothing but our own thoughts, words and deeds can condemn us, and this one condemnation no one can escape, for none of us, whether inclined to virtue or to vice, should ever imagine that our sins will not find us out.

Honesty and fair dealing with one another amount to by far more than any church-discipline, when it comes to that.

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The time when people were sent to burning by Christians, because they 'dared' to reason for themselves—thanks Heaven!—has long passed. The spirit of Christ in the world has conquered the Church of Rome. Now, this is a fact. And you know this. Should you, however, happen not to know it, let our Zeitgeist explain it to you.

Our Zeitgeist is that of 'equal rights for all, privileges for none' as anticipated by Thomas Jefferson.

The Church of Rome is fully entitled to get within her flock all the people she can—just as any other denomination is. And she has the right to win entire Humanity, if she can. She may be able to redouble the number of her following by sincere and practical love; but if she cannot succeed in this, then she is supposed to let alone all those who do not want to join her by their own choice, just as other denominations are supposed to be doing.

Our Zeitgeist does not interfere with

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the Church of Rome. But it will, of course, raise its voice against the tendency of crowding-down and over-ruling people and matters, and while doing so it will be rendering very valuable services to that very Church, thus preventing her from making further mistakes.

## **The Lion and the Mouse**

**A**T times one cannot help wondering why there really must be ugliness to go hand in hand with the beauty and joy of the world. This is a thing which philosophers have been trying to solve in vain for centuries.

People live and work and enjoy day after day; there is apparently only sunshine on the water and flowers on the shore. Then without warning something happens, something goes wrong. A little action, a single word may make a whole life or several lives hideous, making the sunshine fade and the flowers die.

Did it ever strike you how easy it is to make life ugly? And have you ever thought of how easy it is to make religion irksome?

The greater a thing the more we expect of it and the sooner we will dis-

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cover faults with it. And if we do not find weak spots, we will fabricate some.

The Catholic Church, one of the most interesting and greatest institutions ever existing—unbelievable though it might seem—is suffering from an ulcerating spot threatening her very existence. I mean the well-known and much talked-of **Non Possumus**.

You no doubt heard or have read already something about the capillary attraction of evil. It will creep unnoticed into your blood and will undermine your whole system.

Hypocrisy, false measures, perverted aims, and low pandering to brutality and ignorance, vile superstition and intimidations must be destroyed if the Church is to last with honor to herself and with usefulness to others.

The Church of Rome must admit and propagate Truth to disadvantage even. For Truth will conquer weather-worn traditions.

## **Behind the Curtain**

Under the light of modern research quite a number of the Bible's stories need no longer be taken literal. Public opinion about many matters once deemed primary, but which to-day appear to be of subsidiary importance, has been judged by criticism. One may still have fellowship with God without thinking it is necessary to his salvation to believe that the world was created in six days of twenty-four hours each, or that the waters of the Red Sea separated at the word of Moses, or that woman was created from the ribs of man. You may doubt the authority of the Book of Isaiah, or you may assert that the Book of Job is a dramatic putting of evil in the world, or you may surmise that Jonah is but an allegory setting forth the universality of God's love and still remain a child of God. We may even admit that the Bible as we have it is a book derived from secondary sources, or that genealogies and chronologies are hopelessly confused, or that the autographs of the Evan-

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gelists have been irrevocably lost and that there are additions, interpolations and mis-readings just enough to be discouraging, and yet we shall certainly realize that the main feature of the Bible's commission as a veritable word of God is so full, so final, so clear cut, intelligible and authoritative, that one would have to be a superabundant fool to seriously err with respect to it.

Theologians have been trying hard to reconcile Bible and sciences, but they cannot succeed in establishing same as an authority on Geology. And still the Bible is lifted above the possibility of ever being injured by higher criticism.

This is about the spirit which ought to be prevailing in the Catholic Church and which should be preached from the pulpit. Tell people the plain truth and give them well-meant and practical advice. And never let the habit of sensationalism get the best of priests. People going to church do not want to admire the oratorical skill of the preacher; they want

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to get good advice, and practical one, too. Just look at Christ. He, the impersonation of divine wisdom though he was, in his sermons was as plain as he could be, and this is what made him the greatest orator ever lived.

I cannot help quoting a very clever remark of a well-known theologian in regard to pulpit sensationalism. "Some persons might think it would serve the purpose of religion if Christ would go to the top of a down-town building during the noon hour, when the streets are crowded and jump down. Everybody would hold their breath, then at the psychological moment, angels would swoop down and rescue him. A crowd would gather at once and if Christ stood up in an automobile, everybody would gather around to hear what he had to say and they would hang on the words of such a man. But Christ would never do such a thing, for this would be a compromise with the devil."

Now, what do you think of that?

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It almost seems that if Christ to-day had written what he said in the form of a book, he might be placed on the 'Index.'

All bluffing ought to be cut out and replaced by plain truth. This would mean progress, much needed in the Church, for in this instance progress spells change. Such a change must not be a sudden one, but it must be started and carried on carefully and slowly but surely. You can kill a hippopotamus with slow doses of strychnine and he will be just as dead as when you give him two ounces in one mouthful of food.

Just as the people may be known by their roads, the Church will be known and judged by her keeping pace with time.

Cardinal Van Rossum, the Pope's representative at the Eucharistic Congress held last September at Vienna, had an interview with the Rabbi of Austria, and this was being commented upon by pa-

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pers, large and small, just as if he had accomplished a heroic deed whilst, as a matter of fact, it is only natural that leading persons of different religious denominations should be keeping in friendly touch.

You would not use worn-out machinery, would you? Why then cling to worn-out traditions? Now it is mainly due to such traditions that the Church is in peril, especially so in large cities, chiefly because the great middle-class of which the Church is principally composed, has not a hearty interest in conditions which have developed in those cities in recent years, in consequence of which the Church is slowly but surely losing ground in the cities. There is no doubt about cities dominating the nation and if the Church continues to lose in the cities, it does not require a prophet to foretell the inevitable and sad results.

The American railroad system is simply great, still nobody would attempt denying this because of the many ac-

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cidents which everybody knows to be due partly to carelessness. The Church is a greater system, still, showing a by far longer list of accidents: mental shipwrecks. The difference only is that while railroad accidents often cannot be helped, those mental shipwrecks could be wiped out by giving vent to the urgent wish for plain truth, so much prevailing.

For thousands of years Egypt wrestled with the problem of making the Nile a dependable source of material prosperity. Well, it was only a few years ago that its flood was stored up in a reservoir, from which those in the base of the Nile region may draw life-giving water all the time. Primitive makeshifts have been superceded by intelligent engineering methods and success has been the result of a comprehensive plan and a definite policy dealing with the problem as a whole of adapting the Nile to the needs of all the people.

The eternal law being evolution, the Church is bound to move side by side in

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true harmony with it and she should not forget that while on the one hand we need her to teach men to love one another, if men, on the other hand, really would love one another there would be no need of the Church.

The Church ought to leave rulers and governments alone, for she is supposed to be standing above them in her capacity of the herald of truth, the rescuer of the fallen and the distributor of love.

Do you not see how people are wandering from one land to another? How they are madly fighting for supremacy? Can you not see how they are thirsting for gold? Look at the nations how they, like frightened children, are losing faith, hope and strength! How they are craving for temporal things bound to turn to naught! The Church ought to be on the look-out for mankind's sake for "The day of the Lord shall come like a thief in the night and blessed is he who shall be found watching."

Mysticism is the one thing mis-leading,

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so we ought to be careful about it, more so, because it is not only justified, but because we need it, too.

Religion, on the whole, is based more or less upon mysticism.

The Hindoo religions, for instance, are full of high and pure mysticism and one would go altogether wrong by attributing it to the inferior intelligence of the Hindoo. No one to-day would dare ridicule any religion. The Hindoo, it is true, have mysticism in a rather exalted measure not because of their inferior intelligence, but because they are more idealistic than the so-called modern people. But even because we are less idealistic than they, we are more in need of something to lift us up and to elevate our minds out of the rush for the almighty dollar.

The very idea of God is mystic. No one has ever seen God. No one has witnessed his work of creation and the sciences go as far as to trace everything to natural evolution. And still we believe

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in a supreme power. We might call it God, Jehovah, Allah or Buddha, the idea still remains the same.

The general conception of God is a rather vague one. Therefore we need mysticism to give that conception a shape more within reach of our imagination. But this should never be allowed to be lowered down so as to become a tool for crowding down human heart and mind.

The beauty of the mysticism in the Catholic Church needs no emphasizing and she, no doubt, could be looked upon as the most perfect form of Christianity, if she were purified from superstitions accumulated by ages and if she were freed from bigotry and intolerance.

## Asbestos

**L**OVE is a sacred thing. When God gave his only Son for the salvation of Man, he did so induced by love. And the death of Christ, even be it only the result of splendid fantasy, is the acme of love, of real and practical love, such as will not hesitate proffering sacrifices.

To admit Truth often equals a very heavy sacrifice, especially so if by doing so you will be giving others a chance to find faults.

Nietzsche, the great German philosopher, once asked for an adequate explanation of great facts being brought forth by astonishingly little causes, said, if you want to have explained some of Life's problems just go to the river, take a little stone and toss it into the water; first you will hear the faint sound of a splash, then you will see a bubble and then circles growing larger and larger,

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until they will fade away and the surface of the water will reassume its calm appearance of before.

The kind reader must not forget that I am not preaching new principles; much less would I attempt diminishing the value of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, which go back to the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount. They reach back even to the delivery of the Ten Commandments at Sinai. All I was aiming at is to try to show how very profitable it would be to apply these doctrines in such a way as to make them available for meeting the life-issues of to-day. And to do this, I dare say, has become a necessity.

In order as to achieve the desired results with a great undertaking, the latter must first produce a public opinion dead set against all that is not truthful.

The well-to-do "city churches" as well as the so-called "country churches" seem to be demonstrating their failure in advancing Christianity. It will often

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seem to you as if some, quite some, of the fashionable city churches were run by hired assistants who, so you might think, are in their profession just in order to get out of it all they possibly can, for themselves. And as regards the country churches, you might get the impression as if they were 'awakening' and as if their places were being taken by new fangled denominations or religious sects which have nothing in them but emotion.

The greater the restlessness of a certain epoch, the greater contradictions will present themselves. While on the one hand we will find utter lack of religion, on the other hand we will meet with rather puzzling attempts to explain the miracles as performed by Christ on a scientific basis.

In any reconstruction of Christianity's early history, miracles will take their natural places, harmonizing with the environments; now-a-days atheism seems to be doing the same.

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As to atheism, and in spite of it, Man alone through the ages—gradually standing erect—has at last fixed his gaze upward, and for a few thousand out of the tens-of-thousands of years he has lived on earth, his chief interest has been **religious**.

Do you remember what Voltaire had said? "If there had not been a God, it would have been necessary to have one invented." Religious feeling opens the mind, lifts up the spirit from the earth, changes Man from a selfish animal to a cosmic being in sympathy and in touch with universal life and thought. And can you realize that the **POWER OF RELIGION** is only at the beginning of its work?

Pity the man who fails to realize that thought is given us to study and to revere the Infinite with which religion alone can bring us into contact and spiritual fellowship. And pity the man who is the centre of his own Universe.

No matter how hard one would try, he

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could not help admitting that all the economic, industrial and political questions facing us and demanding solution, profoundly are religious questions. For religion is the soul of the nation and must be taken as such, after all. As to the effects of religion, however, no man can be saved—in spite of churches—who is not willing to be lost in the service of his kind.

Strange to say, to-day there seems to be prevailing the idea that if a man does the correct things in 'getting right with God,' there is no particular hurry about squaring the account with Man. To make a long story short, we must be planning a rescue from the merciless jaws of a system under which the very money paid for the services of professional evangelists has been squeezed out of live blood.

How much we want religion shows that during the last presidential campaign the following of a certain party

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called prayer meetings in order to secure their party's victory.

William Hawley Smith, author of *The Evolution of Dodd*, says we are suffering from different kinds of "Snakes." There are snakes of politics, dress, of religion and appetite even, and Mr. Smith rightly says that these snakes should be lifted up like Moses lifted a serpent of brass up on a pole to direct the children of Israel to gaze upon and be cured. "The snake of religion is the inconsistency of most lives and their profession."

You must not think this publication to be a forced one. Assuming though it might sound, it was needed, and the more arguments you will hear to the contrary, the less you will accept them.

It never matters **who** is telling the truth as long as he is truthful and means well.

The dear old ship of St. Peter's is in danger. Small wonder, for it is rather time- and care-worn. Do you not see

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how it is fighting the waves? The past nineteen centuries have overburdened it with much of superfluous ballast. Throw overboard all that does not belong there, so that you may get a good and easy sailing.

To leave things in the Roman Church as they are now and to rigidly refuse concessions which would never touch her fundamental doctrines, would mean to overhear the ardent and urgent cry for Progress, and which is more, it would also mean taking advantage of God's patience, which spells punishment, for "Ye shall not tempt thy Lord and thy God."

For heaven's sake, do not let the ship of St. Peter's sink: keep it up, for we need it more than mankind ever did.

\* \* \*

There are about 265,500,000 Catholics in the world. And this is not coincidental. Nothing ever happens without leaving some trace; something caused it happen, and something will result from

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it. So then, everything is but a link in a long, long chain.

There is no problem—no matter how intricate—that could not be solved. One just has to study it carefully and see the right thing. The difficulty lies with knowing it and admitting its faults.

If you can lift up your mind as high as to openly admit faults you know of, and if you are strong enough to resolve to remedy them, then you will find this to be a wonderful world, after all.

We speak of the human race as the thinking race. As a matter of fact, however, only an astonishingly small percentage of us do actually think. We readily and gladly take the path which has been laid out for us by the leaders of our respective classes, for the sensation in most of us is feeling much rather than thinking, the habit of thought being pushed to the background by the habit of action.

We are swayed by habits, both, inherited and acquired and as a result of

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this most of us would prefer working on forever in the same groove rather than to get into unknown fields so as to cut an individual groove for ourselves.

How long is it going to take us individuals to think for ourselves?

Somehow or other we not only enjoy the security of established social order, but cling to it, while in the meantime we dread the very thought of the adventures and experiences by which this security has been handed down to us. Thus, most naturally, we are depriving ourselves of the very valuable and much needed ability of seeing the weak spots on that so much talked of security.

**"IF THE SON OF MAN COMETH,  
THINK YE HE WILL FIND FAITH ON  
EARTH?"**

**— The End —**





**This book is under no circumstances to be  
taken from the Building**

[illegible]



